WILLIAM THORNBOROUGH,

THE

BENEVOLENT QUIXOTE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

There, to the ſympathetic heart
Life's beſt delights belong;
To mitigate the mourner's ſmart,
To guard the weak from wrong.
Ye Sons of luxury, be wiſe;
Know, happineſs for ever flies
The cold and ſolitary breaſt;
Then let the ſocial inſtinct glow,
And learn to feel another's woe,
And in his joy be bleſt.

BEATTIE.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
M.DCC.XCI.

17438.74

HARVARD COLLEGE
APR 16 1929
LIBRARY

W

Greenough fund
(4 vols)

THE

BENEVOLENT QUIXOTE.

CHAP. I.

Indifference, clad in Wiſdom's guiſe,
All fortitude of mind ſupplies.

BUT not ſuch was the fortitude of William Thornborough; though a philoſopher in the beſt and moſt unlimited ſenſe of the word, he was no ſtranger to the anxiety which is a conſtant tax on the feeling and affectionate heart; and at the period when this hiſtory be-

gins, he was under extreme uneaſineſs on account of his elder brother, then on his travels, from whom he had not heard for many weeks.

This unuſual ſilence, and his uncertainty where to direct to him, as in his laſt letters he had expreſſed an intention of immediately leaving Vienna, without mentioning his route, both diſtreſſed and embarraſſed our hero, as he ſaw no method of obtaining the intelligence ſo neceſſary to calm his perturbed mind. All his uſual ſources of amuſement were now ineffectual: he could not pay any attention to his ſtudies; but wearied by them, and oppreſſed by his own reflections, he ordered his horſe one afternoon in July 17—, and rode over to viſit

viſit his friend and neighbour Mr. Fitzwilliam, whoſe long intimacy with his late father, and the general reſpectability and benevolence of whoſe character, rendered him the propereſt perſon to apply to for advice or conſolation.

Mr. Thornborough's viſits to Beech Park were ſo ſeldom, that Mr. Fitzwilliam was at a loſs to account for this, till the former mentioned the uneaſineſs of his mind, and begged his advice what meaſures to purſue. What paſſed between them on this ſubject it is now unneceſſary to relate, and I wiſh to inform my readers why a more frequent intercourſe did not ſubſiſt between theſe gentlemen, whoſe hearts were in many reſpects ſo ſimilar, though their manner

gins, he was under extreme uneaſineſs on account of his elder brother, then on his travels, from whom he had not heard for many weeks.

This unuſual ſilence, and his uncertainty where to direct to him, as in his laſt letters he had expreſſed an intention of immediately leaving Vienna, without mentioning his route, both diſtreſſed and embarraſſed our hero, as he ſaw no method of obtaining the intelligence ſo neceſſary to calm his perturbed mind. All his uſual ſources of amuſement were now ineffectual: he could not pay any attention to his ſtudies; but wearied by them, and oppreſſed by his own reflections, he ordered his horſe one afternoon in July 17—, and rode over to viſit

viſit his friend and neighbour Mr. Fitzwilliam, whoſe long intimacy with his late father, and the general reſpectability and benevolence of whoſe character, rendered him the propereſt perſon to apply to for advice or conſolation.

Mr. Thornborough's viſits to Beech Park were ſo ſeldom, that Mr. Fitzwilliam was at a loſs to account for this, till the former mentioned the uneaſineſs of his mind, and begged his advice what meaſures to purſue. What paſſed between them on this ſubject it is now unneceſſary to relate, and I wiſh to inform my readers why a more frequent intercourſe did not ſubſiſt between theſe gentlemen, whoſe hearts were in many reſpects ſo ſimilar, though their manner

of living was at this time totally different.

Mr. Fitzwilliam was a man of the world; that is, he lived in it, and conformed to its faſhions and cuſtoms, where they neither interfered with propriety or morality. He paſſed ſix months of the year in town,—ſoberly, as Lady Grace expreſſes it, and when in the country joined with the neighbouring gentlemen in the ſports of the field, and denied his lady and daughter no amuſement they could derive from public places; and as they followed them with moderation, he had no reaſon to reſtrain their wiſhes. He often lamented that the ſon of his late beloved and reſpected friend ſhould live ſo totally ſecluded

ſecluded from ſociety, and would ſometimes, when our hero gave him an opportunity, gently hint a wiſh that he would conform to the habits of the world in ſome degree, and aſſociate with the ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood; and would have preſſed his viſits to Beech Park more frequently, but that he feared, if he urged this too warmly, the misjudging part of mankind, who either from depravity or ignorance are by far the greateſt part, might miſconſtrue this ſolicitude into a wiſh of engaging his affections to his daughter; a wiſh, which though it is poſſible he might feel, yet he ſcorned taking any pains to accompliſh.

Though he ſincerely ſympathized in

the diſtreſs which now brought his young friend to his houſe, yet he was pleaſed to ſee him; and could not avoid thinking more highly than ever of the liberality and goodneſs of his heart, from the anxiety he ſhewed for the fate of a brother, whoſe death would put him into poſſeſſion of a fortune which was more than double his own, and whoſe ſociety he had been little accuſtomed to, as during their childiſh years they lived entirely ſeparate; and ſoon after the uncle's death, an event which brought William back to the Abbey, George was ſent on his travels. But the feelings of fraternal affection glowed too ſtrongly in the breaſt of our hero to be ſtifled by any ſelfiſh conſideration; indeed he thought ſo little of the eſtate, that during

ing the whole tedious period of his uneaſineſs, it never once occurred to him that he ſhould be a gainer by the death of his brother.

When the gentlemen had ended their conference, Mr. Fitzwilliam led him into the drawing-room, where his lady and Miſs Caroline waited their arrival at the tea-table. At nine o'clock he would have taken leave; but a violent ſhower of rain falling, accompanied by ſevere thunder and vivid lightning, he was, though with ſome difficulty, prevailed on to ſtay all night: and when he retired to his apartment, he felt more ſtrongly than he ever had before, how much power the ſociety of thoſe we equally admire and eſteem, has, in

calming a diſturbed mind and ſoothing a reſtleſs imagination. Whilſt he is enjoying a quiet ſlumber, the effects of his friend's remonſtrances and perſuaſions, I will relate to the reader ſome of the circumſtances previous to the beginning of this hiſtory, which it is neceſſary he ſhould be acquainted with.

The father of our hero loſt his wife a very few years after their marriage, and was eaſily prevailed upon by his uncle to reſign to him his youngeſt ſon William, who left Berkſhire in the ſixth year of his age, and accompanied Mr. Trevors into Cornwall, where he was immediately committed to the care of Mrs. Maſon, the houſekeeper, who had no little pride and pleaſure in her new charge.

Mr.

Mr. Trevors was an old bachelor, who had devoted his whole life to the ſtudy of natural and experimental philoſophy. Half the rooms in his houſe were filled with dried plants, cabinets of inſects, electrical machines, air pumps, and every kind of apparatus that could aſſiſt his ſtudies, or contribute to his amuſement. The novelty of theſe things at firſt attracted the attention of the little William, who gazed with much delight on the dancing figures, and other ſtrange effects produced by electricity; yet he was ſurpriſed, and almoſt terrified, at the ſtrange metamorphoſis in his uncle, when he firſt ſaw him in his green velvet cap and long night-gown. This dreſs, which was by no means becoming to a man like him, tall and corpulent,

with a dark brown complexion, black eyes, and Roman noſe, had procured him in the neighbourhood the appellation of conjurer; and which his ſkill in a variety of experiments, of which the vulgar could form no idea of the cauſe, contributed to confirm his title to.

William ſoon became a proficient himſelf; and grew ſo ſteadily attached to the ſtudy of natural philoſophy, that, when he firſt went to ſchool, his thoughts were ſo abſtracted, that he paid little attention to his leſſons; but the ridicule which his peculiar turn excited among the boys, who would laugh at, and call him dunce, piqued his pride, and determined him to ſhew it was not want of capacity which induced him to neglect his

his taſks; and he ſoon raiſed himſelf to the head of his claſs; and, during the time he remained with Mr. Thompſon, applied ſo ſteadily, that he became maſter of every ſpecies of ſchool learning, long before the age that boys uſually are.

Yet every vacation he flew with his accuſtomed eagerneſs to his favourite purſuits, which theſe long reſtraints gave him more ardour for; but the humanity which ever diſtinguiſhed his character even then was ſo evident, that he often incurred his uncle's high diſpleaſure, by releaſing little animals kept for any particular experiment, which he was ſenſible would torture them; as he reaſoned with a ſtrength far ſuperior to his

years, that we have no right to torment any of the brute creation, to gratify an idle, or at beſt an uſeleſs, curioſity. He ſhuddered when he ſaw beetles or butterflies transfixed with pins, and expiring in agonies ſimilar to thoſe we ſhould feel, was the ſword which had pierced our vitals ſuffered to remain in them. Theſe little creatures he often releaſed by putting an end to their ſufferings and lives in the quickeſt manner, and never allowed the rewards his uncle tempted him with, to induce him to add to his collection in this way; but often, when he had met with a beautiful inſect, after admiring its vivid colours, he would let it fly away, ſecretly reſolving, if ever fortune made him maſter of a muſeum, it ſhould conſiſt only of inanimate objects, however

however incomplete the virtuoſi might deem it to be.

Notwithſtanding his caution in theſe reſpects was diſpleaſing to Mr. Trevors, the proficiency he made in every branch of polite learning, added to the knowledge he diſplayed in, and his attachment to, his favourite ſtudy, rendered him every day dearer to him; and at his death, which happened when our hero was about eighteen, he left him his whole eſtate, the rents of which were clear two thouſand ſix hundred a year; as he had never ſuffered his purſuit of curioſities to break in upon his fortune, though his income was almoſt wholly devoted to it; and this, as his ſtyle of living was in other reſpects private and economical,

economical, was quite ſufficient for his purpoſe.

William Thornborough was then at Oxford; and after removing his late uncle's muſeum to Thornborough Abbey, where he intended to live with his father, he left the houſe in Cornwall; as Mrs. Maſon, whom he conſidered almoſt in the light of a mother, and who had been handſomely provided for by her maſter's will, declined the offer he generouſly made her of continuing in it for the reſt of her life, and choſe to reſide in London.

He continued two years longer at the univerſity; but obſerving, when at home in the vacations, his father's health

was

was fluctuating, he refuſed to accompany his brother to the continent, as he wiſhed not to leave the kingdom till he ſaw him recovered: but this was a bleſſing he was not to enjoy; Mr. Thornborough fell into a rapid decline, and expired before his eldeſt ſon could return to England, and he only arrived in time to ſee the laſt duties paid to his father.

When the grief of the brothers was a little abated, George endeavoured to perſuade William to viſit with him the different courts of Germany, whither he intended to go after a ſhort ſtay in Paris: but he uſed every argument in vain; the natural turn of William's diſpoſition, which the late melancholy event now added

added to, together with his habitual love of philoſophy, prevented his compliance; and he ſuffered his brother to leave England alone, whilſt he ſhut himſelf in the Abbey, declining all general intercourſe with the neighbouring families, only returning their viſits when ceremony obliged him. He had promiſed his brother to continue in Berkſhire till he was ſettled in England, but with the determination of living in the moſt retired manner; and this reſolution he ſtrictly adhered to, to the great mortification of thoſe gentlemen whoſe intimacy with his father, and the prepoſſeſſion they felt in his favour, made them anxious for more of his ſociety.

The applications which were frequent-

ly

ly made to his benevolence, he never refuſed, but referred them to the houſe-keeper, who by his permiſſion was very liberal of her donations, and no perſon was ever turned from his gate without relief. He rode or walked every day, but always at thoſe hours when he expected leaſt interruption; and this was generally before breakfaſt. He kept up a correſpondence with very few of his fellow collegians, and every kind of field ſport he diſliked from principle: the idea of hunting or ſhooting ſuch harmleſs creatures, he would ſay, was wholly repugnant to his feelings; and nothing would ever tempt him to join a party of this kind.

With theſe ſentiments, it was no wonder

der that he was the jeſt of one half of the neighbourhood, and the pity of the other, as they happened to be acquainted with the different traits in his character; ſome ſaying they believed he lived like a Bramin, and would eat no animal food, leſt he ſhould make a dinner upon his father or uncle; and others, that he was a young miſanthrope, who deteſted ſociety from an imagination that the world was a compound of folly and wickedneſs. But thoſe who knew him more intimately admired his talents, reſpected his virtues, and loved his ſociety, whilſt they pitied and regretted the ſingularities in his diſpoſition. Among theſe was Mr. Fitzwilliam, who, however, was not without hope that his brother's return to England would work that reformation in his

his character, he ſo earneſtly wiſhed for. Liberal, generous, brave, and humane, William Thornborough had but one fault, and that was more the effect of education than nature. This his old friend was ſenſible of, and therefore looked forward with the more probability, that time, added to the efforts of friendſhip, might conquer this unfortunate peculiarity.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

ACCUSTOMED to early riſing, William Thornborough awoke when the firſt dawn of day broke into his chamber, but with it returned all thoſe unpleaſant ſenſations, which ſleep had only baniſhed for a time, not obliterated. Amid the reflections which aroſe in his mind, it ſtruck him very forcibly, that, ſhould his apprehenſions be verified with reſpect to his brother, there was ſcarcely a being to whom he was attached ſufficiently to render the remainder of his life intereſting or happy. He had neglected almoſt every opportunity of cultivating the

the friendſhip of thoſe whoſe ſimilarity of age or ſituation might have made an intimacy equally eligible on both ſides. He recollected with painful regret how ineffectual his former amuſements had proved, the preceding day, to leſſen that uneaſineſs which had yielded to the kind efforts of friendſhip; and reſolved in future to alter his mode of life. But theſe reflections at preſent led to others ſo diſtreſſing, that he determined to indulge them no longer; but riſing immediately, he left his apartment, and went to the library with an intention of reading till the family were aſſembled to breakfaſt: but in this he was diſappointed, the door was locked; and he was returning to his chamber chagrined and diſpirited, when it occurred to him that

he

he had ſeen ſeveral books lying in the parlour window, where they had ſupped the evening before.

It was ſtill ſo early, that not even a ſervant was up in the houſe. Softly opening the door and unbarring the window ſhutters, he took the books, which happened to be three volumes of Sir Charles Grandiſon. His ſtudies had been hitherto in ſo abſtracted a line, that he had never met with this work before. He opened it accidentally at the part where Sir Charles is employed in ſettling the Danby family, and exerting both his benevolence and liberality for their comfort and happineſs. The ſtyle and language charmed him; and he read on with the utmoſt earneſtneſs, till the breakfaſt

faſt bell ſummoned him to join the family. To Miſs Fitzwilliam he acknowledged what had engaged his attention, and begged her, to whom he found theſe volumes belonged, to permit him to take them to the Abbey. This requeſt ſhe readily aſſented to, and appeared pleaſed that any thing had the power of amuſing his mind; whilſt the vivacity and good humour with which ſhe rallied him on his choice, and the ſympathizing intereſt ſhe appeared to take in his diſtreſs, gave his heart a ſenſation of pleaſure it had been long a ſtranger to. After promiſing Mr. Fitzwilliam to be a better neighbour, and even hinting at a viſit the following day, he took leave; and immediately on his return home began reading again with that

that eagerneſs with which he followed every thing that amuſed or intereſted him.

When he had finiſhed the hiſtory, and recollected the various and amiable lights in which Sir Charles Grandiſon appeared, he was ſtruck with the contraſt in his own character: as a ſon, a brother, guardian, friend, or huſband, in whichever way he turned the picture, ſtill he was equally excellent in all, conſpicuouſly and actively virtuous in every point of view. He looked back on his own life: his virtues were all negative ones; he had been a dutiful ſon and nephew to the beſt of fathers and uncles; he had been an affectionate brother; but he had ſuffered his love of retirement to over-

overbalance every motive which ſhould have induced him to accompany his brother abroad; and this reflection was followed by a ſevere ſelf-reproach, as he conſidered that, were he now with him, he ſhould not be thus ignorant of his fate. A guardian, a friend, or a protector, were characters he had no claim to; he had ſedulouſly avoided every opportunity of becoming ſerviceable to his fellow-creatures, by conſtantly ſhunning all ſociety: by making the buſineſs what ſhould have been only the amuſement of his life, he had contracted his knowledge of the world; and, by devoting himſelf to what he termed philoſophy, he had neglected the practice of every virtue. Even the charitable actions he had performed were not ex-

empt from the ſame faults which diſtinguiſhed the reſt of his conduct: he had given, it is true, liberally, but to whom? to thoſe who aſked alone, without diſcrimination, and without ſcrutiny: thus, perhaps, he had beſtowed on the idle and unworthy, whilſt modeſt merit pined unnoticed in her obſcure and diſtant habitation.

When he had thus retraced every part of his paſt conduct, and ſeverely condemned his paſt inactivity, he began to conſider how he might beſt atone for it by his future exertions. The firſt thought which ſtruck him, was immediately to go to Vienna in ſearch of his brother, and, if he ſhould happily find him, remain abroad as long as he pleaſed, and when he

he returned to England, live like a rational being. He formed a thouſand romantic ſchemes of happineſs from his new reſolution, and reviewed with aſtoniſhment the years he had waſted in inactivity. From the vacuum which anxiety had made in his mind, it ſeized with the more avidity on his new plan of life, and an ardour which may appear inconſiſtent to thoſe who do not conſider that his indolence was acquired and habitual, but not inherent; and he became fully conſcious of the powers of real benevolence, when her very idea only could thus animate and enliven a heart ſo long torpid, or ſenſible only of pain.

CHAP. III.

FULL of his new ſchemes, the very morning after they were formed, our hero prepared to viſit Beech Park, and acquaint Mr. Fitzwilliam with the alteration which had taken place in his ſentiments; when the haſty arrival of a man on horſeback, who rode into the court-yard, prevented him. A packet with a black ſeal was delivered to him: the direction in Mr. Littleton's hand, the gentleman who had accompanied George Thornborough abroad, rather as a friend than a tutor. This confirmed the long-anticipated calamity; and William's heart

received

received ſo ſevere a ſhock, it was many minutes before he recovered ſufficient compoſure to open it: but ſuſpenſe at length growing too terrible to endure, he broke the ſeal with a trembling hand, and experienced all the horrors of certainty, as he peruſed the following letter.

Convent of ——,

Deſtined as I am to acquaint you with an event, the recollection of which ſtill gives me an unconquerable ſenſation of horror and grief, I have been for ſeveral days endeavouring to ſubdue my feelings ſufficiently to give you a calm and regular account of what I doubt not your affectionate heart has long ſince apprehended, from the ſilence of your

dear brother, and my ever-lamented friend;—but in vain: yet I am conſcious that whilſt I delay this relation, from a fancied tenderneſs both to your feelings and my own, I act in direct oppoſition to propriety, and add to that diſtreſs on both ſides, which it is my earneſt wiſh to leſſen: for till I have performed this neceſſary but painful taſk, I can know no peace; and till you are relieved from that ſtate of ſuſpenſe your laſt letter ſo well expreſſed, which has been lately forwarded to me here, your affliction cannot yield to the hand of time, which I truſt it will, when the worſt you can imagine is revealed to you. After this preparation, from which you muſt gueſs the truth, I will relate as diſtinctly as I have now

the

the power of doing, the events which preceded and led to this ſad calamity.

Your brother's laſt letter informed you of his intention of quitting Vienna, an intention to which I was fatally a ſtranger, or I might——but what avails this at preſent? He left me, under a pretence of accompanying a Milaneſe nobleman to the houſe of a gentleman about ſix leagues from the city, and I remained ſeveral weeks under this idea; till at length, alarmed at his ſilence, I went myſelf to ſeek him. On the road I met the marquis of L——, who, on my enquiring for my friend, informed me, to my great ſurpriſe, he had not ſeen him during the period I mentioned. I returned with him to Vienna; and on my expreſſing the un-

eaſineſs I felt at this ſtrange miſtake, for ſuch I imagined it to be, he gave me reaſon to apprehend it was, on the part of my poor miſguided friend, an intention to keep me from the knowledge of the truth.

The marquis then informed me Mr. Thornborough's attachment to the counteſs of M— was no ſecret among his gay companions; and that, as he had quitted Vienna ſoon after the count's family, he had himſelf little doubt but that he followed them to Florence. I knew he admired the counteſs, but had little idea that his paſſion for her was ſo violent, as to induce him to take ſuch a ſtep without my knowledge: but on recollecting and comparing a variety of circumſtances, I was

I was convinced it muſt be as the marquis of L—— aſſerted.

I inſtantly ſet off for Florence, and on my arrival enquired for the count. I found he had been gone a fortnight, and no one could tell me whither. After ſome time ſpent in a fruitleſs ſearch after my young friend, I prepared to leave the city, diſconſolate and weary, when I accidentally learned the M— family were at Milan; and as this fair but deceitful woman was the loadſtone which attracted him, I had no doubt but he had followed her thither.

To Milan therefore I went, and the reſidence of the count could not long be unknown to me: but conſcious as I

was of my purpoſe, I could not wait on the counteſs, without perhaps incurring the ſuſpicion of her huſband what were my ſecret motives, as, when at Vienna, I had never accompanied my friend on his viſits to them. I waited there long before I had an opportunity of ſpeaking to her; but at laſt I met her at the marchioneſs of P——s converſazione. I obſerved ſome days before this the count had purpoſely avoided me; and I felt piqued and angry at his behaviour, miſtaking the effects of ſhame for thoſe of pride. I addreſſed the lady at firſt with an aſſumed eaſe; and after ſpeaking on ſome indifferent ſubjects, I enquired when ſhe had laſt ſeen Mr. Thornborough. She ſtarted at my queſtion, and appeared extremely confuſed and agitated: at length recovering

recovering ſome degree of calmneſs, ſhe anſwered, with a haughty and diſdainful air: "The chevalier Thornborough was at Vienna when I left it, and I know not" —here ſhe pauſed and heſitated. "Yes, madam," replied I, "that I am certain of; but you know he followed you to Florence. Tell me, and tell me truly, where did you laſt ſee him? Believe me, I wiſh not to take any ungenerous advantage of your anſwer: I merely wiſh to find him; nor ſhall any one know to whom I am indebted for my intelligence."

She coloured violently. At laſt, "I confeſs," ſaid ſhe, "he did follow me to Florence, where he dared inſult me with a declaration no woman of virtue could liſten to. I left Florence with my huſ-

band, and where he now is I cannot tell." She then turned from me to another gentleman, and, after converſing a few moments with him, abruptly left the aſſembly.

I thought I could account for her emotion by ſuppoſing it aroſe from a conſciouſneſs of guilt; yet, alas! how little did I gueſs the real cauſe!

After various and ineffectual enquiries for my friend, I ſet out on my return to Florence, where I thought it poſſible he might remain concealed. On the road an accident happening to my chaiſe, I was obliged to alight, and walk near a mile to the hut of a peaſant, to have ſome aſſiſtance in repairing it. The people,

ple, unaccuſtomed to work of the kind, were ſlow; and I waited three hours before I could go on; and it then grew ſo late, they told me I ſhould ſcarcely reach even the next poſt-houſe before it would be dark; and, as a reaſon why I ought not to venture, added, the foreſt through which I muſt paſs had been of late infeſted by banditti, who had a very ſhort time ſince murdered an Engliſh gentleman and his ſervant, who were in company with the count and counteſs of M——. *You* may imagine how I was ſtruck by this intelligence, and what dreadful apprehenſions aroſe in my mind. They thought my agitation proceeded from terror; and a man gave me the particulars of an event, which though I wiſhed to hear, I knew not how to aſk for.

He

He ſaid, as he was coming with another peaſant from Milan ſome days before, he met the count and his retinue driving furiouſly along; and the coachman not regarding any obſtructions in his way, the carriage overturned from the wheels going over a ridge, when it had paſſed them about thirty yards. They both ran back, and aſſiſted the ſervants in replacing it, during which time they learned the count's party had been attacked by four villains, whom however they had with difficulty put to flight, with the aſſiſtance of an Engliſh gentleman and his ſervant, who rode up whilſt they were engaged, but whoſe interference had coſt them dear, as they were both left dead in the foreſt, and that the count had not eſcaped without a wound. Terrified by this

this intelligence, the peaſant who accompanied him would have turned back: but this, who was an old man, had been a ſoldier, and had as much courage as humanity, repreſented to him the robbers certainly would not return ſo ſoon, and that perhaps the gentleman might not be quite dead. Overcome by his perſuaſions, the other conſented to go on; and ſoon after their entering the wood, they found the two bodies which the count had ſo inhumanly deſerted, though they fell in his defence. The ſervant was wounded in a manner too ſhocking to relate, and entirely dead: the gentleman was bleeding, and ſtill warm. They bound up his ſide as well as they could, and ſupported him in their arms to a monaſtery not far off, where the good fathers received him with unaffected

affected pity, and promiſed to uſe every method for his recovery, though they gave little hope of being able to effect it, from the appearance of his wounds.

The circumſtances of this ſtory left me no room to doubt, but that it was my unhappy friend who had thus fallen a ſacrifice. I rewarded the peaſant for his care, and intreated he would inſtantly ſhew me the way to the convent. He then found the true cauſe of my emotion, and expreſſed his concern with a degree of feeling ſuperior to his apparent ſituation in life. In his anſwer to the enquiries I made on this ſubject, he told me, though now an inhabitant of that dreary ſolitude, the younger part of his life had been ſpent in more civilized ſcenes, where he had learned

learned to feel for others, by having experienced misfortunes himſelf.

I believe he thought I ſhould aſk him what theſe afflictions were, for he appeared to love talking, and would have entered into a full hiſtory of himſelf, had not my ſilence checked him. I was in truth too much taken up by what I had heard, and what I expected to hear, to liſten to his tale. The confuſion of the counteſs was now explained. Inhuman and treacherous woman, may thy crimes be thy puniſhment! But why, unleſs fearful of a diſcovery of her own barbarity, did ſhe not direct me to the ſpot where ſhe had left the poor youth to die, and but for this old peaſant's humanity, there he muſt have died?—I feel I am incapable

ble of writing as calmly as I wiſh; yet I will endeavour to go on, without uſeleſs recriminations and unavailing regret.

I ſoon arrived at the convent, and, on ſpeaking to the porter, was inſtantly admitted. The friar came to me, and, on hearing my name and the ſubject of my enquiry, ſhook his head, and told me I had gueſſed too well—Mr. Thornborough was the gentleman; but, though yet alive, he was in too weak a ſtate to admit me without ſome preparation. He had, he ſaid, at his requeſt, written to me ſome days before, and ſent an expreſs with it to Vienna; and he bleſt the providential accident which had been the means of bringing me to the convent, as he feared, if I had been in Germany, I could not have arrived in time to ſee my young friend alive.

alive. He then ſent a friar to the cell where the poor dying youth had been placed on his firſt arrival, to prepare him to ſee me; and I ſoon received a ſummons.—Let me not tell you what were my ſenſations when I firſt ſaw him, nor the alterations a few weeks had made in his appearance; I will only ſay he expreſſed the utmoſt joy at ſeeing me; and the narrative of what had paſſed ſince we parted, and which he gave me at intervals as his ſtrength permitted, I will relate as conciſely as I can.

From having received at Vienna ſuch encouragement from the counteſs, as tempted him to believe his paſſion would not be unſucceſsful, he determined to follow her to Florence: there he was admitted

mitted to all her parties without perceiving the leaſt alteration in her behaviour, to induce him to imagine ſhe had reſented his declaration. The firſt opportunity he had he threw himſelf at her feet, and told her how deeply he was attached to her; that he had followed her from Germany, becauſe he could live only in her preſence; and depended on her forgiveneſs, from the ſmiles ſhe had formerly beſtowed on him.

The glow of indignation which muſt have animated the cheek of a woman of virtue at this confeſſion, ſhe was a ſtranger to. She ſmiled and bade him be diſcreet, and he might be happy; but on the ſudden entrance of the count, who ſhe found was informed of the attachment of the unhappy

unhappy Thornborough, ſhe changed her tone, and accuſed him of daring to inſult her with a declaration of love. The enraged huſband drew his ſword, whilſt your brother, diſmayed and aſtoniſhed at her duplicity, remained almoſt motionleſs, till the menaces of the count recalled him to recollection. Diſarmed as he then was, the count would have attacked him; but the lady, conſcious of the impropriety of her own behaviour, threw herſelf between them, requeſting your brother to depart, which he did, after informing his antagoniſt he would give him whatever ſatisfaction he might require, on the following day.

That the counteſs, when he was gone, endeavoured to make her own ſtory good,

I have

I have not the leaſt doubt; but in all probability her huſband was too well acquainted with her ſpirit of intrigue, to give credit to all ſhe aſſerted; for early the next morning he ſet off towards Milan, attended only by a few ſervants. Mr. Thornborough alſo aroſe early, expecting a ſummons; and after waiting ſome time, ſent a ſervant to learn the ſtate of the family. The return of Philip ſurpriſed and ſhocked him; and blindly infatuated to this worthleſs woman, who he feared would be inhumanly treated, he determined to follow them privately; and having bribed one of their ſervants who remained behind, he learned their route, and began his journey, accompanied by Philip only, a ſhort time after them. It was not his intention to come

up

up with them; but on entering the foreſt he was alarmed by the ſcreams of a woman; and on riding up diſcovered the count and his three ſervants engaged with four ruffians. Himſelf and Philip, as they were both armed, turned the victory in their favour: but one of the villains, enraged and diſappointed at the loſs of their expected booty, ſhot poor Philip, who fell at his maſter's ſide, and they all rode off.

The count then for the firſt time diſcovered to whom he was indebted for his ſafety; but uninfluenced by gratitude, and alive only to the impulſe of jealouſy and revenge, he accuſed the brave Thornborough of having pre-concerted a meeting with the counteſs, and of fighting only in her defence. The lady,

lady, willing to ſave her reputation, and recover, if poſſible, her huſband's good opinion, joined with him in the bittereſt invectives, and ſeverely reproached him for perſecuting an innocent woman, and endeavouring to ruin her honour and her huſband's peace of mind. Perhaps the count could form no idea of ſuch baſeneſs exiſting in the female mind, as could induce a woman to expreſs ſuch high diſpleaſure, and even rage, againſt a man ſhe had encouraged and pretended to love, and who had been juſt hazarding his life in their defence. This idea might have tempted him to believe her accuſations were at preſent juſt; and he demanded inſtant ſatisfaction, with a violence no mere ſuſpicions could juſtify.

Your

Your brother confeſſed he was at that inſtant ſo ſhocked at the deceit and barbarity of the woman he had loved beſt in the world, that his life appeared of no conſequence to him, and he prepared to fight with ſcarcely a wiſh that victory might be on his ſide. They fought; the count received a ſlight wound, but your brother one ſo ſevere, that he fell inſtantly; and the counteſs, ſuppoſing he was dead, urged her huſband to go on immediately, and he complied. After having violated all the laws of honour and humanity, he barbarouſly left the man he had thus ſacrificed, without a human being to remove him from the ſpot where his revenge had laid him. It was murder, abſolute murder; and though the laws of man cannot, the juſtice of

Heaven will overtake him. The reſt you know, except that he was inſenſible till he had been ſome time in the convent, and the good fathers feared he was gone for ever.

When my poor friend had concluded his narrative, he bitterly lamented his want of confidence in me. My advice, he ſaid, might have prevented his falling into thoſe errors which a violent and improper paſſion had led him into. He confeſſed he had met perhaps with a juſt puniſhment, and he forgave from his ſoul the authors of his death; though the inhumanity of the counteſs had wounded him more deeply than the ſword of her huſband. He begged me to requeſt you not to give way to thoſe habits

habits of retirement into which you had fallen, but enter into the world, and enjoy the pleaſures it might afford, with moderation and without guilt. He ſaid his will was left in the hands of Mr. W—— of Reading, and that his friends would find he had not forgotten them.

The entrance of father Francis, who had attended him with particular aſſiduity, now interrupted him: he was already faint and exhauſted, and I had for ſome time requeſted him to be ſilent.

——Let me draw a veil over the ſcenes which followed. It would be too much for me to write, or for you to read: let me only ſay, as a ſatisfaction to your

feelings, which nothing ought to counteract, that he had every poſſible attention paid him by the whole ſociety, whoſe humanity and benevolence are ſcarcely to be equalled; that he had every aſſiſtance that art could give—and that he died like a hero and a chriſtian.

Oh, Mr. Thornborough! could thoſe who are uniform in the purſuit of every vice have witneſſed the true penitence he expreſſed for the commiſſion of one, and the comfort he received from my aſſurances that a ſincere repentance is always accepted at the throne of grace, they muſt have reformed their errors.

My own ſervant James ſhall attend the remains to England. I am ill myſelf,

myſelf, very ill: but be not alarmed for me, it is merely the conſequence of fatigue and anxiety, and I mean to remain here till I am reſtored to health. The fathers Jerome and Francis inſiſt on my not leaving them, till they can part with me ſatisfied of my recovery: their attentions will, I am ſure, have the deſired effect. I receive from them both conſolation and amuſement. Would to Heaven you had ſome friend who could afford you the ſame! Yet you will, I truſt, exert your fortitude, on this I confeſs trying occaſion. Let me hear from you ſoon. I will write again by James.

Ever yours,

ROBERT LITTLETON.

When our hero had acquired ſufficient reſolution to read this letter regularly and calmly, the ſhocking circumſtances attending his brother's death affected him almoſt beyond what his conſtitution could ſupport. He ſent for Mr. Fitzwilliam, who came inſtantly, and left him not a moment till his mind was calmer, and for ſome weeks devoted his whole time to him, taking upon himſelf every care of the funeral. When the remains of the unhappy young man were brought over, his will was opened; and, excepting a few trifling legacies to ſome friends and acquaintance, and a very conſiderable one to Mr. Littleton, his whole eſtate devolved to his brother, the value of which was above five thouſand a year, beſides ſome money in the funds.

funds. This however afforded little conſolation to our hero; he was before happy, had a fortune ſufficient for every purpoſe of life, and wiſhed not to add to his ſtore. Time however, and the united efforts of his own reaſon, and Mr. Fitzwilliam's arguments and entreaties, at length ſubdued his grief, and enabled him to purſue his former plans.

CHAP. IV.

WHEN the heart has loſt an object on which it was particularly fixed, it ſeizes with the more avidity the firſt ſource of comfort which offers, and purſues it ſometimes to an extravagant height. Such were the feelings and ſuch the intentions of our hero, when his mind recovered its uſual tone, and he found thoſe ſources fail which had formerly been his conſtant amuſement, and it naturally and eagerly recurred to thoſe ſchemes which had filled it before he had received the melancholy intelligence from Italy, which for a time had baniſhed every

every other idea. His plan of going abroad was of courſe altered; but he dwelt with much ſatisfaction and delight on his philanthropic purpoſes; and his mind was ſo continually bent on this ſubject, that he became almoſt diſtracted, and, like Don Quixote, he could have ſet out in armour to redreſs the grievances of mankind. Till theſe ſchemes could be put in execution (for he was delayed ſome time by neceſſary buſineſs) his mind became ſo abſtracted, Mr. Fitzwilliam was quite alarmed leſt he ſhould relapſe into his former way of life: but this fear was ſoon loſt in ſurpriſe, when he received one morning a note from Mr. Thornborough, to ſignify he was gone to Oxford, and perhaps ſhould not return to the Abbey till he had ſpent

ſome weeks in London. Indeed, the moment he was at liberty, he ſet off, without taking any ſervant, meaning to travel *incog.* as he thought the leſs figure he made, the more probably he ſhould find out the diſtreſſes of his fellow-creatures, unveiled by ceremony, and unconcealed by ſhame.

Whilſt he purſued his journey, loſt in reflection, he was addreſſed within half a mile of Wallingford, by a young man of the name of Fennel, whom he had ſlightly known when at college. Mr. Fennel, at that time ſenſible that Mr. Thornborough was a young man of conſiderable expectations, had always paid him that profound reſpect and ſervile homage, which the little-minded, judg-

ing

ing of others by themſelves, imagine is the beſt way to obtain friendſhip; but which in a generous mind is moſt likely to excite diſguſt: and this had been the caſe with our hero, who had ever returned with cool politeneſs the other's attention. But he now expreſſed ſuch prodigious pleaſure at this unexpected meeting, that his heart yielded even to the appearance of kindneſs, and returned his civilities with unuſual cordiality, and deſired he would breakfaſt with him at Wallingford.

During this repaſt, young Fennel, encouraged by his manner, and finding he had no particular buſineſs at Oxford, perſuaded him, as the vacation was not yet over, and he would find few of his

friends in the univerſity, to alter his plan, and accompany him back to Fennel Farm, where he might have ſome days ſhooting, and where his father's family would be proud of the honour of entertaining him. Mr. Thornborough, as has been before obſerved, never engaged in the ſports of the field; therefore the laſt argument had little weight with him: but conſidering that, according to his new plan, he ought to increaſe his acquaintance as much as poſſible, he determined to accept the invitation, and accompanied his old acquaintance to Fennel Farm, where they arrived juſt before dinner; and he was received with the utmoſt delight by every individual the inſtant his name was announced.

Mr.

Mr. Fennel, ſenior, lived at this farm by choice, as, from its vicinity to Oxford, he hoped he might have an opportunity of ſettling his daughters advantageouſly, particularly as his eldeſt ſon, who was then at the univerſity, could often introduce the young collegians to their acquaintance, and might recommend his ſiſters to their notice. This plan had in part ſucceeded, but in a way that might be imagined. Miſs Fennel, at an early age, ran off with a young man who had juſt taken orders: but, as he had more honour than ſhe had prudence, he really married her, and ſoon afterwards obtained a ſmall curacy in the county of Weſtmoreland, where at this time ſhe was the mother of four children; and having ſo ſcanty a proviſion,

ſion, ſhe often wiſhed herſelf once more unmarried and at Fennel Farm.

The youngeſt, miſs Kitty, was ſtill at home, and had too much cunning to follow her ſiſter's example: artful, plauſible and inſinuating, ſhe was every way calculated to promote and execute her father's intention. A jilt by education, and a coquet by nature, ſhe had flirted with ſeveral young men; but the inſtant ſhe diſcovered their fortunes were below what ſhe had fixed as a ſtandard of merit, ſhe diſcarded them without ceremony and without remorſe.

In conſequence of this behaviour, ſhe was for ſeveral years totally neglected, till chance threw in young Fennel's way

way (who, on theſe occaſions, acted the jackall) a Mr. Harford, an elderly gentleman, who had lived for many years a bachelor on a ſmall income; but ſucceeding unexpectedly to a good eſtate, he was looking out for a partner to enjoy it with him, when Harry Fennel was introduced. The probability of his ſiſter's making a conqueſt of this man, who had ſeen little of the world, inſtantly ſtruck him; and he invited him to Fennel Farm with that warmth of friendſhip which Mr. Harford knew not how to reſiſt. Kitty practiſed every art to engage his attention, became the notable woman inſtead of the fine lady, loved walking and rural pleaſures, and deteſted all cards, except now and then a ſober game

game at whiſt. With her perſon, ſenſe, and theſe ſentiments, it was no wonder her deſigns ſucceeded; he ſoon made her a formal offer of his heart and hand, which ſhe in due time accepted: but though her avarice and ambition were gratified, her vanity was not; ſhe ſighed for a ſmarter lover, and a man of the world; and piouſly determined, if chance threw one in her way, to diſmiſs Mr. Harford, as ſhe had the reſt.

The arrival of our hero gave her an object of purſuit, and a conference with her brother completed her intention. Harry Fennel fancied he knew his character; and that, artleſs, generous and tender, it would be eaſy to work

work upon his feelings to their wiſhes; and they planned their ſchemes accordingly. Mr. Harford was at this time a viſitor at the farm; and during the whole afternoon and evening, whilſt Kitty obſerved the ſtricteſt attention to him, ſhe appeared ſo dejected, and ſighed ſo frequently, that he was alarmed, and aſked if ſhe was ill. A violent head-ache was pleaded as an excuſe, and ſhe retired early. She was ſoon followed by the reſt of the family; but Harry detained Mr. Thornborough to talk over, as he pretended, college adventures.

When they were alone, "I am," ſaid he, "ſo unhappy at preſent, that I cannot turn my thoughts from the ſubject of my anxiety for five minutes together. You

You ſaw my poor ſiſter, Mr. Thornborough. Alas! the dear girl's malady is not in her head, but her heart. You muſt have obſerved the ſighs ſhe ſtruggled to ſuppreſs. She is the beſt creature in the world, and is now going to ſacrifice herſelf to filial obedience; for my father has expreſsly commanded her to receive the addreſſes of Mr. Harford, on pain of his utmoſt diſpleaſure; and ſhe obeys in ſilent deſpair. To be ſure, he is a worthy man; but what is a worthy man to a cultivated liberal mind, glowing with the fineſt feelings, and tremblingly alive to the moſt delicate ſenſibility? She regards him with averſion; and I have in vain perſuaded her to look on him in a more favourable light: ſhe tells me her diſlike daily increaſes."

"But,

"But, ſurely," interrupted Mr. Thornborough, "if your father knew her inſuperable objections to him, he would not thus inſiſt on her compliance."

"My father," returned Harry Fennel, "is of opinion, that *Marry firſt and love will come afterwards*; and, though not particularly attached to Mr. Harford, he does not chooſe ſhe ſhould reject ſo good an offer. Would fortune but throw in her way one who would ſave her from this fate, I am fully convinced he would rather rejoice than be angry with her."

"Has this affair been long in agitation?" ſaid our hero.

"Oh,

"Oh, no," replied the other; "this is only the beginning: and Mr. Harford, had he the ſpirit of a gentleman, would ſee my ſiſter's diſlike, and leave her."

"Surely," returned Mr. Thornborough, "ſomething may yet be done. Could I be ſo happy," continued he heſitating, "as to be the means of ſaving her, there is nothing I would not—" He pauſed, and Harry, fancying he had in part obtained his point, would not preſs it farther, leſt he ſhould excite ſuſpicion. "Let us, my dear friend," he anſwered, "at preſent call another topic, for this preſſes too heavily on my mind." They converſed about an hour longer on indifferent ſubjects, and then ſeparated for the night.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

FULL of his new plan, our hero aroſe the next morning, and took his accuſtomed walk to meditate how he ſhould proceed. Miſs Kitty ſaw him, from her window, go through the garden-gate into the adjoining meadows, and determined to throw herſelf *accidentally* in his way when he returned. This was eaſily effected; he met her in the turning of a walk: ſhe ſtarted very prettily, and would have paſſed on; but he requeſted her to ſtay, as he wiſhed for a few minutes converſation with her. She aſſented, and as they walked he began thus:

" Pardon

"Pardon me, miſs Fennel, if what I am going to ſay ſhould appear impertinently officious. From what your brother hinted to me laſt night, and your own behaviour, I am but too much inclined to believe you are not happy in your preſent proſpects. Confide in me freely, and, believe me, I will, in any way that you can ſuggeſt, exert myſelf for your happineſs."

Miſs Fennel held her handkerchief to her eyes, and in a voice almoſt inarticulate thanked him for the friendly intereſt he took in her happineſs; but declared ſhe could adviſe him to no method which would be effectual. This was true enough, for the only method ſhe wiſhed him to purſue, could not ſo properly be hinted by herſelf.

"I am,"

"I am," continued ſhe, "ſo well convinced that nothing will induce my father to give up the hope of ſeeing me, as he calls it, happily ſettled, that I have only to ſubmit in ſilent deſpair to my fate: that fate, it is true, is a bitter one; but I ſee no hope of avoiding it."

Here ſhe ſobbed violently, and Mr. Thornborough, whoſe compaſſion was thoroughly excited for this unfortunate girl, endeavoured to ſoothe her with ſuch tender ſolicitude, that ſhe fancied ſhe had already a deep intereſt in his heart; and this hope was ſtrengthened, when he told her, as they drew near the houſe, that he could not help flattering himſelf he had ſtruck on a plan

plan to ſave her from this terrible ſacrifice, if he was not too ſanguine in believing it poſſible for him to make ſome impreſſion on a heart, which he truſted was not wholly devoid of ſenſibility.

Deceived by this ſpeech, which ſhe thought alluded to herſelf, ſhe replied with unfeigned energy, "Oh, Mr. Thornborough, you are too good: but whatever cauſe you undertake muſt be ſucceſsful; your eloquence, I am ſure, cannot be reſiſted." Here they parted; ſhe went inſtantly up ſtairs to compoſe her countenance, in which ſhe ſucceeded ſo well, that, when the family met at breakfaſt, there were no traces of her tears to be ſeen, to the infinite ſurpriſe of

of our hero; who, however, imagined the alteration proceeded from the hope ſhe entertained from his laſt words; and in this he was right, though he little ſuſpected the conſtruction ſhe had put upon them.

In the courſe of the morning Mr. Harford ſpoke of his intention to ride; and Mr. Thornborough, anxious to complete his deſign, deſired to accompany him, and they ſet out together. After ſome indifferent converſation, miſs Fennel was mentioned, and the dejection and indiſpoſition ſhe had complained of the preceding evening was remarked by her lover as a thing very unuſual, as he had never ſeen her before but in health and ſpirits.

"Ah, poor young lady," replied Mr. Thornborough, looking ſteadily at his companion, to obſerve whether he underſtood him; "the ſtruggle between her duty and inclination has been too much for her, and her conſtitution is now ſinking under it. From her conſtant cheerfulneſs hitherto, there is more to be apprehended. The conſtraint ſhe placed upon her feelings was too ſevere to be ſupported, and ſhe now yields to deſpondency."

"What ſtruggles, what conſtraint do you mean, ſir?" ſaid Mr. Harford.

"Is it poſſible you do not know? If really you have not diſcovered the cauſe of her melancholy, and are the man of honour

honour I believe you to be, I will, ſir, ſo far confide in you, as to give you my real ſentiments. Miſs Fennel is the victim of filial obedience: in compliance with her father's wiſhes, ſhe has conſented to give you her hand, when her heart is not only indifferent, but even averſe to you. Surely, Mr. Harford, thus informed, you will not cruelly inſiſt upon the performance of a promiſe, given merely becauſe ſhe could not reſiſt the will of an imperious father, who commanded her to comply. If you have the feelings which ought to dignify humanity, you will of your own accord relinquiſh a purſuit which can only afford you diſappointment and remorſe; and do it in a way which may leave Mr. Fennel no cauſe to reſent his daughter's

conduct, who has behaved with the utmoſt propriety: for what proſpect of happineſs can you have with a woman, who cannot beſtow her affections at the ſame time ſhe gives her hand?"

Mr. Harford was ſo loſt in anger and aſtoniſhment, that for a few minutes he knew not how to reply: at laſt, aſſuming a degree of calmneſs he felt not, "I am, ſir," ſaid he, "extremely ſurpriſed at what you tell me. Miſs Fennel's averſion, as you are pleaſed to call it, muſt have been entertained very lately; as I am certain, from the very firſt, ſhe received my addreſſes with the utmoſt ſatisfaction, and could ſcarcely conceal the pleaſure ſhe felt when I laid my heart and hand at her feet. I fancy you wiſh

wiſh to ſupplant me in that young lady's affection; but, ſir, give me leave to ſay, I am not to be trifled with."

"Upon my word, ſir," returned our hero, with a degree of frankneſs no one could diſbelieve, "you miſtake my motive: but I hope you will not doubt my veracity, when I aſſure you, I am prompted by no wiſh but that of ſerving you both. Miſs Fennel is an amiable girl; but ſhe has not thoſe ſuperior elegancies, nor that brilliancy of underſtanding, which could alone ſtrike me. I have at this time no thought of marrying: but if I had, miſs Fennel, I again repeat, is not the woman I ſhould chooſe."

Mr. Harford had never been particularly attached to Kitty; but he wiſhed to ſettle, and he fancied he ſhould in her meet with a wife who would be equally eſſential to his domeſtic comfort, and admired by the world. But this ſpeech of Mr. Thornborough's, whilſt it convinced him of his candour, made him leſs ſolicitous to continue his addreſſes, as the way in which he mentioned her was a proof that he conſidered both her underſtanding and manner in an inferior point of view; and from this began himſelf to reflect, it might be poſſible for him to marry a woman who might introduce him to the world, from which he had hitherto lived ſecluded, and which would be a much better plan than fixing on one whoſe

ſituation

ſituation in life was rather below his own: but, as a man of true honour, he determined not to give her up, unleſs convinced Mr. Thornborough's ſuſpicions were real.

Some more converſation paſſed between them on the ſubject, in the courſe of which our hero informed him, that he ſpoke not from ſurmiſe, but the real ſentiments of miſs Fennel and her brother; and had promiſed them to take ſome method of relieving her, and none had appeared to him ſo eaſy, as ſpeaking at once to Mr. Harford openly upon the ſubject; and he aſſured him, as a proof he had no other views, he would quit Fennel Farm the next morning.

Mr. Harford thanked him for his intentions and candour; and reflecting upon it after they had parted, he determined to mention it to the family that afternoon, in the preſence of Mr. Thornborough: but his courage failed; he feared the old gentleman's reſentment, and waited the opportunity of his abſence.

Miſs Fennel appeared at dinner with a ſparkling ſatisfaction in her eyes, which aroſe from the hope Mr. Thornborough's laſt words had excited, and which his polite attentions increaſed. Mr. Harford thought it the effect of her expectations of relief: he had ordered his horſes to be ready for him, and juſt as the tea things made their appearance,

ance, Mr. Fennel being called out of the room on ſome buſineſs, he addreſſed the young lady with much compoſure in the following manner:

"I will not, madam, delay a moment longer confirming the hope Mr. Thornborough has raiſed in your boſom; from this hour you are free: I will trouble you no more with addreſſes, which that gentleman has convinced me are diſagreeable to you. Yet I could wiſh you had been from the firſt equally explicit; for, believe me, your candour would have had as much weight with me as his ſolicitations: however, I wiſh you happy in your choice, let it fix on whom it may."

The greateſt part of the company ſtood aghaſt at this ſolemn addreſs. Mr. Thornborough alone underſtood it. He advanced, and, taking her hand, "I have," ſaid he, "madam, ſucceeded beyond my utmoſt expectations: Mr. Harford willingly reſigns you; he leaves you to a happier, a more fortunate man, for fortunate he muſt be who can boaſt an intereſt in your affections."

This, which was only ſpoken in politeneſs, and from the innate benevolence of his heart, contributed ſtill to deceive the unfortunate Kitty; and ſuppoſing, from Mr. Thornborough's manner, he had perſuaded Mr. Harford to reſign his pretenſions in his favour, ſhe looked

looked at the latter with an expreſſion of gratitude, and replied:

"Indeed, ſir, you have been long in an error; yet how to convince you of your miſtake I knew not. That gentleman has ſaved me the painful taſk of confeſſing, that your heart, though endued with ſo many virtues, yet failed in ſecuring the poſſeſſion of mine."

"It is enough, madam," he anſwered; "I am ſatisfied of your objections, and will now take leave. My horſes are ready; and it cannot be pleaſant for me to ſtay in a houſe where I can ſcarcely think I have been well treated: for why did not ſome of you earlier acquaint me with the objections

your ſiſter raiſed?" addreſſing himſelf to Harry Fennel, and a younger brother, who was preſent, but wholly unconcerned in the plot. The former made ſome evaſive anſwer, delighted at the apparent ſucceſs of his machinations, when they were all thrown into the utmoſt confuſion by our hero's requeſting Mr. Harford to wait till he could accompany him.

"You know, ſir," continued he, "I promiſed, when I requeſted you to reſign this young lady, to leave Fennel Farm inſtantly, leſt you ſhould ſuſpect me of a wiſh to ſupplant you, which Heaven knows my heart is far from feeling. Let us, therefore, together bid this amiable family a long farewell. I

am

am ſufficiently rewarded by the conſciouſneſs of having contributed to miſs Fennel's peace; and you muſt, I am ſure, by the recollection of having given up ſo generouſly your long cheriſhed hopes of happineſs, when you were convinced they were inconſiſtent with hers."

To deſcribe the conſternation of the brother and ſiſter, when he ended this ſpeech, is impoſſible. Harry could not ſpeak, and Kitty in vain endeavoured to conceal the mingled ſhame, reſentment, and diſappointment, which glowed in her boſom, and at length burſt into tears. After a few minutes, however, ſhe recovered her ſpeech, ſufficiently to upbraid

upbraid Mr. Thornborough for his cruel deception.

"Did you not," cried ſhe, ſobbing violently—"did you not tell me, this morning in the garden, how deep an impreſſion I had made on your heart, and how much you hoped I ſhould return your love?"

"Upon my honour, madam," returned he with vehemence, "you entirely miſtook me; I meant no ſuch thing, I only ———."

"It is of no conſequence what you did mean, ſir," interrupted ſhe, "if you did not mean to make me an offer. I

am

am ſure you had no buſineſs to ſet Mr. Harford againſt me, and make him deſert me in this barbarous manner, if you had not intended to ſupply his place."

Mr. Harford had now penetration enough to ſee through the whole ſcheme, as her previous confeſſion of her diſlike to him, which in the violence of her anger ſhe had forgotten, had given him a ſtrong light: being, however, of a quiet diſpoſition, he left it to our hero to fight his own cauſe, who anſwered miſs Kitty's charge with ſpirit.

"I am ſorry to ſay, madam, it requires not much conſideration to learn the motives for this apparent duplicity of conduct. You do not probably recollect

collect that not five minutes ſince, in the preſence of myſelf and this whole company, you openly avowed your diſlike to Mr. Harford, and publicly thanked him for reſigning you. If that diſlike was only feigned, you muſt beſt know what motives you had for requeſting my interference this morning, and expreſſing ſo much diſtreſs at the idea of an union with a man, who, I muſt ſay, appears to me infinitely too good for you. Your brother, I imagine, was alſo deceived; for he contributed to lead me into this error. Conſcious of my own integrity, and ſuſpecting no deſign, I determined, if poſſible, to aſſiſt you, and ran the riſque of affronting this gentleman by my zeal in your cauſe. If I was meant for the dupe on this occaſion,

you

you are miſtaken; I am not, madam, ſo eaſily caught: and, ignorant as I may have hitherto proved myſelf of the ways of the world, I have now to thank you for inſtructing me how to diſcern in future between real ingenuouſneſs and aſſumed ſimplicity; between the artful pretences to ſorrow, and the unaffected anguiſh of heart-felt diſtreſs."

At theſe words he left the room and houſe; and walking to a little public houſe in the village where his horſe had been kept, he was ſoon after joined by Mr. Harford, and they agreed to proſecute their journey together.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

WHEN Mr. Harford arrived at the new inn, he found Mr. Thornborough extremely diſconcerted, and more angry than he had ever been in his whole life, with all the Fennels, who had endeavoured ſo ſhamefully to impoſe on him: he felt however ſome comfort in the reflection, that their duplicity, as indeed it generally does, had fallen on their own heads. Yet he was deeply mortified at the ill ſucceſs of the very firſt plan he had formed for the benefit of mankind, and ſhocked that his time and arguments had been thrown away: but on lamenting this to Mr. Harford, he deſired,

ſired him to remember this was by no means the caſe at preſent; as, though the benefit was intended for another, he had received it, by being preſerved from an union with a worthleſs woman, who was evidently a female fortune-hunter.

"I am now," continued he, "well convinced that I ſhould not have been diſcarded, but for the hope they entertained of entrapping you: but her reſentment in this laſt inſtance has counteracted even her art; for you had no ſooner left the houſe, than ſhe fell into the bittereſt invectives againſt her brother, for leading her into the opinion that you would be eaſily gained; and then, as if inſenſible that I heard all this, ſhe

ſhe reproached me for leaving her ſo inhumanly; and then, quite exhauſted, ſhe fell into ſcreaming hyſterics. During her fits, I attempted to quit the houſe; but her brother prevented me, ſaying I could not without the utmoſt barbarity leave her in that ſituation. So I ſtaid till ſhe recovered, and then, informing her how thoroughly I ſaw and deſpiſed her arts, I came away, and immediately ſought out the father, to whom I gave a candid account of the whole affair, leſt it ſhould be miſrepreſented, and my character ſuffer in conſequence. He appeared concerned, and very much enraged againſt his daughter for her folly, yet endeavoured to perſuade me to forget it; but I was fixed in my purpoſe,

poſe, and ſincerely hope I ſhall never meet any one of the family again."

Mr. Thornborough joined in this wiſh, and they ſpent the evening very pleaſantly together. He found Mr. Harford a plain, ſenſible man, good-humoured, and poſſeſſed of an excellent heart; but as unſkilled in the ways of the world as himſelf.

On the following morning they rode together to Henley upon Thames, where Mr. Harford preſſed our hero ſo earneſtly to accompany him to Woodcot, where he lived, about two miles from the town, that he accepted the invitation; but, wiſhing to be in London, he ſtaid only a few days, and returned to the inn

inn at Henley, where he waited for the London coach, which vehicle he intended ſhould convey him to town.

When he got into the ſtage, he found the only paſſengers were a decent elderly man and his daughter, a very pretty girl about ſeventeen, whoſe countenance was marked with tears, whilſt her frequent ſighs and inattention to all around her were a proof that ſhe had recently ſuſtained ſome heavy calamity; and this he was more convinced of, from the ſtern and angry looks of the father, who, inſtead of endeavouring, like his late friend Mr. Fennel, to draw his attention to his child, appeared rather afraid of it; whilſt the poor girl herſelf ſeemed rather to ſhrink from than ſolicit notice.

Here

"Here then," cried he to himſelf, whilſt his heart expanded with benevolence—"here at leaſt there can be no deceit; but here is affliction, which it may be my fate to relieve." From this idea he determined to take the firſt opportunity of learning this young woman's diſtreſs; nor was he long waiting for one. When they ſtopped to dine, the old man ſaw a gentleman paſs the window, who he inſtantly recollected had left London ſome months before in his debt. He told his daughter the circumſtance, and, leaving the inn, deſired they would not wait dinner, but he would return by the time the coach was ready.

Mr. Thornborough loſt not a moment, but inſtantly telling his fair fellow-traveller

traveller he was much intereſted for her fate, which he feared was not an happy one, requeſted to know what it was which had thus diſtreſſed her.

She burſt into unfeigned tears at this queſtion, and, as ſoon as ſhe could compoſe herſelf ſufficiently, replied, ſhe was the moſt miſerable creature in the world, and ſaw no method of avoiding the fate that awaited her: and, upon Mr. Thornborough's expreſſing a wiſh to hear the cauſe of her affliction, ſhe began in the following manner:

"My ſtory, ſir, is very ſhort, but very melancholy. My mother died when I was young; and on my father's marrying again, I was taken by my aunt,

aunt, who bred me up: ſhe is the beſt woman in the world; her huſband has a farm on this ſide of Dorcheſter. About a twelvemonth ago I was courted by a young man, whoſe father was a tradeſman in London. My uncle and aunt both liked him as well as I did in compariſon, and encouraged his viſits, and they wrote to my father about it: he gave his conſent, and we were to have been married very ſoon; when the other night, without giving me the leaſt reaſon, he came down from London, and inſiſted I ſhould go back with him; ſaid I ſhould never marry Mr. Waters whilſt the world ſtood, but return and live with him and my mother-in-law, who is I know a terrible croſs woman; and it is nothing but that I ſhould not be ſettled better than her

daughter, who is a few years older than myſelf, that made her put it into my father's head. But I am ſure that is very hard upon me, for her daughter will have nothing of her own, but what my father may give her away from his own family: and my uncle and aunt, who have no children of their own, brought me up handſomely at a boarding-ſchool, where I learnt to do nothing but dance, and read, and write, and talk French; and have promiſed to leave me handſome when they die, and keep me like a gentlewoman. And now I muſt go home and work hard for my mother-in-law and her children, and be ill uſed too, and loſe Mr. Waters, who perhaps, when his father dies, might keep me a chaiſe."

Here

Here ſhe burſt into a freſh flood of tears, which ſo melted our hero, that he again begged to know how he could aſſiſt her. "Oh!" cried the poor girl, "if I was once more at my aunt's, I ſhould mind nothing; for when my father comes to reflect he may be ſorry: but then it will be too late, for ſhe will not receive me, and Mr. Waters may leave the country, and then I ſhall never ſee him again."

"Suppoſe," cried Mr. Thornborough, "you take a chaiſe from hence whilſt your father is abſent, and leave me to perſuade him to forgive you; could you not go to ſome friend's, where, even if he ſhould be inclined to purſue you, he

could not immediately find your retreat? and he would then have time to cool his anger."

Her eyes ſparkled with innocent ſatisfaction at this propoſal; and ſhe replied, ſhe could contrive all that very well, but for one thing. Here ſhe pauſed and bluſhed, and, after ſome heſitation, confeſſed that it was not in her power to hire a chaiſe; as her father, perhaps fearful of ſome plan of the kind, had taken care to deprive her of the means. This was ſoon obviated by our hero, who deſired ſhe would without ſcruple accept of his purſe on this occaſion. After ſome faint refuſals ſhe at length conſented, and he inſtantly ordered a chaiſe, handed the ſimple girl in, and wiſhed her

her happy. The carriage drove out of town with all the blinds drawn up: whilſt the poor deceived parent was purſuing his fugitive debtor, whom he at length found; and ſucceeded, though not without ſome difficulty, in obtaining the ſum which was his due.

Our hero returned to the parlour fire, after he had ſeen the diſtreſſed damſel ſafe in the carriage, his heart glowing with the conſciouſneſs of having now at leaſt done a good and uſeful action, in ſaving this poor girl from the tyranny of her father and mother-in-law, and reſtoring her to an indulgent aunt, and a beloved and deſpairing lover. Whilſt deeply meditating how he ſhould pacify the wrath he muſt ſoon encounter

from the father, the ſubject of his thoughts, whoſe name was Wilſon, entered the room. Not ſeeing his daughter when he opened the door, he haſtily withdrew to enquire for her; when to his utter aſtoniſhment he learned from the landlady, that the young gentleman who came in the coach with him, and who ſhe thought might be the young lady's brother, had hired a poſt-chaiſe for her, and ſhe had been gone ſome time.

Re-entering the parlour with the utmoſt anger in his voice and manner, he attacked Mr. Thornborough, and accuſed him of having trepanned his child; and demanded to know where he had ſent her, and with what intent,

threatening

threatening him with an immediate application to juſtice, if he did not comply with his requeſt.

When he had a little exhauſted his paſſion, our hero replied with great calmneſs, that, as to his threat, it was ridiculous, and, if put into execution, uſeleſs; that all the people in the inn could witneſs there was no force uſed reſpecting the young lady's departure. He had handed her into the carriage, a meaſure which common civility induced him to take; but that he was totally ignorant of the place of her deſtination, and ſuppoſed ſhe had given her own orders.

Mr. Wilſon, though not pacified by

this ſpeech, yet knowing of no poſſible method of redreſs, again left the room, and enquired to what place the chaiſe had been hired; and was told Henley was mentioned, but that the young lady ſaid, ſhe might perhaps want it a few miles farther. This gave him but little ſatisfaction. However he prepared to follow her, and in the mean time returning to our hero, he begged him, in a more calm and very earneſt manner, to give him ſome information reſpecting his child; adding, he muſt ſurely know her intention, and the cauſe of it, ſince it could ſcarcely have been formed in ſo ſudden a manner without her aſſigning ſome reaſon, which, as he had been preſent the whole time, could not have eſcaped him.

"Now,

"Now, Mr. Wilſon," returned our hero, "that you can argue calmly, I will tell you all I know myſelf, and even confeſs I adviſed her to this ſtep, and furniſhed her with the means of putting it in execution, in conſequence of her —"

"You adviſed her!" exclaimed the diſtracted father, interrupting him; "and by what right, what authority —"

"Be compoſed, my good friend, and I will tell you from what motives I acted: be aſſured they had no reference to myſelf; but in pity to her deſpair and terror, I contrived her eſcape, and promiſed to endeavour to reconcile you

to her return to her aunt and her lover."

The poor man ſtood transfixed with ſurpriſe, whilſt he gave him a conciſe relation of what ſhe had told him, and added his opinion of the cruelty there would be in tearing her from a deſerving young man, to whom ſhe had been ſo long and ſo deeply attached. There was ſomething of ſuch extreme ingenuouſneſs in Mr. Thornborough's manner, that Wilſon could not but be at once perſuaded he had ſpoken the truth; and that, however erroneouſly he had acted, it was from the beſt motives.

"You have been, ſir," ſaid he, "deceived, but innocently deceived, by my poor

poor girl, who is herſelf the victim of a cruel and baſe deception. I now ſee my own folly in acting too precipitately; for had I informed her upon what grounds my ſuſpicions were founded, infatuated as ſhe is, I am ſure ſhe would have liſtened to conviction: but I expected implicit obedience, and my want of confidence in her may prove her ruin, and my own diſgrace.——But remember, young man (for though my ſuperior in rank, yet, if you are really innocent of intentional evil, you are my inferior in knowledge of the world)—remember, I ſay, that you do not again interfere in domeſtic concerns, leſt you ſhould again bring infamy on a ſimple girl, and heap deſtruction on the head of a wretched parent."

Mr. Thornborough at this addreſs looked as ſilly as any one could who was conſcious of meaning well, though he had done ill; and, but for the ſupport he felt from his own integrity, he would have deeply felt the ſeverity of this reproof. Ever open to conviction, and ready to atone for the evil he had unwittingly committed, he repeatedly aſſured Mr. Wilſon how much he was concerned for the miſtake he had been led into, and begged to know how he might repair it, if reparation was poſſible. "At all events, ſir," added he, "let me accompany you in your ſearch; and if want of fortune is your only objection to the young man, as far as it is in my power (and my power is, believe me,

as

as unlimited as my will) I will obviate your ſcruples."

Wilſon ſhook his head, and was going to inform him of the truth, when he was interrupted by a waiter, who told him the chaiſe he had ordered was ready; upon which they both ſtepped in, and, telling the poſtillion to drive as faſt as poſſible the ſame road the other had taken, he thus began his narrative.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

"YOU have learnt from my poor child, that ſhe was bred up by an uncle and aunt. My preſent wife, though really the beſt woman in the world, objected not to this, as ſhe was well convinced a mother-in-law's care is ſeldom approved by the child's own relations. I am myſelf a trunk-maker, and in good buſineſs: however, as I have ſeveral other children, I was not at all diſpleaſed at their promiſe of providing for her. They gave her what is called a good education; and ſome time ſince my ſiſter wrote

wrote to tell me the girl had been courted by a young man whom they all approved, and who appeared very deſerving of her. As I knew Mrs. Collet was one of the moſt credulous of women, and her huſband too much engaged in buſineſs to attend properly to this affair, I returned them an anſwer, aſſuring them of my conſent, if upon enquiry the young man proved worthy. My girl's letter informed me his name was Waters, and his father an haberdaſher in Cheapſide, in an extenſive way of buſineſs. She added, young Waters was then ſomewhere in the country, and ſhe knew not how to direct to him; but as he was ſoon to be in London, ſhe would deſire him to call upon me.

" The

"The very day I received this letter, three or four Oxonians, moſt of them intoxicated, came into my ſhop for a large packing caſe. When they had fixed on one to their mind, they debated where it ſhould be ſent. At laſt one ſaid, "Why, Hal, let it go to your father's, can't you?" The gentleman to whom this was addreſſed, and who had ſomething ſo remarkable in his perſon that I can never forget it, conſented, and gave me the direction in his own writing.

"When they left me, and I had fulfilled their orders, I ſet out to find Mr. Waters in Cheapſide; but in vain: neither there, nor in any ſtreets leading from it, nor in any part of the neighbourhood, could I hear of ſuch a perſon.

ſon. Alarmed at this, and fearing an impoſition, I wrote to Fanny, without acquainting her with my ſuſpicions, telling her to let me know when Mr. Waters came next into their neighbourhood, and I would meet him. Accordingly upon her ſummons I went down. He was expected the following day; and in the mean time ſhe gave me ſome of his letters to read, which, to my great ſurpriſe, I thought were written in a hand I had ſeen; and too ſure, the moment he entered the houſe yeſterday afternoon, I diſcovered him to be the ſame young man who came into my ſhop with the other collegians, and who had given me a direction to his father, in a name totally different from that he now aſſumed. I took him into a room alone,

alone, taxed him with his duplicity, and told him by what method I had diſcovered it. I then begged to know why he had deceived us, and what his motives could poſſibly be for appearing in an inferior ſituation of life.

"He coloured, heſitated, and at laſt confeſſed, he feared, if he had in his own character addreſſed my daughter, his father might have heard of it; and, as he was conſcious the connection would not meet his approbation, he wiſhed it to be unknown till he had received Fanny's heart, and engaged my conſent; which he alſo feared would not be given, if I knew how much he was her ſuperior, and that his own family would not approve of the alliance.

"And

"And how," cried I, "did you ſuppoſe you ſhould gain my conſent, without my knowing who or what you were?"

"Perhaps," added he much confuſed, "if I found you inexorable, I might have prevailed on her to elope with me to Scotland: and, when it was beyond the power of fate to ſeparate us, all might have been well; neither you nor my father would have refuſed to pardon us."

"This," returned I, "was a poor dependance, and a ſtrange plan." I then told him, he muſt never ſee Fanny again; for, to you I will confeſs, I was very certain, from what he ſaid of his own ſtation in life, and the confuſion with

with which he anſwered my laſt queſtion, that he never intended to marry her at all.

"My ſiſter ſimply took his part on this occaſion, and petitioned for my conſent, which I would have refuſed, could they have been even married in my preſence; for I knew too well the general conſequences of unequal marriages, to doom her for ever to contempt, and perhaps miſery, even if I could have ſubmitted to join with him in deceiving his father. He left the houſe in a rage, and the poor girl fell into fits. They all reproached me with cruelty, for they knew not the reaſon I had for ſuppoſing he meant to betray her.

"In the courſe of the evening I went to Dorcheſter,

Dorcheſter, and accidentally diſcovered a carriage had been ordered to be ready near the village, at ſeven this evening. Suſpecting but too juſtly for what purpoſe, I determined, without giving them reaſon to ſuſpect my intention, to take her away this morning, and thus prevent their elopement. What I had thus far ſucceſsfully accompliſhed, you have in a moment thoughtleſsly deſtroyed."

Mr. Thornborough felt all the force of this reproof, and expreſſed his extreme ſorrow for the part he had taken, but promiſed to omit no exertion to recover the fugitive.

They had travelled a few miles beyond

yond Henley, when they met the carriage returning empty; and on enquiry learned from the poſtillion, he had met a poſt-chaiſe and four with a gentleman in it; that they ſhould have paſſed each other, but the young lady ſcreamed out, and the gentleman, inſtantly alighting, put her into his own chaiſe, and, paying him the extent of his demand, deſired he would not return to Henley for ſome time, but ſtay and reſt his horſes; and this he had complied with, therefore concluded they were many miles on their journey.

Mr. Thornborough and his companion then deſired to know which road the carriage had taken: but the man replied he could not tell, except that they went

went on towards Oxford; and perſiſted in this ſo conſtantly, though Mr. Thornborough offered him a large bribe for farther intelligence, that they could not doubt but that he had ſpoken the truth. After various plans, they at length agreed to go on to Mr. Collet's; and, if they could not inform them with ſome degree of certainty, which it was very probable they might, as they had ſo much befriended the young man, they would part, and each take a ſeparate road; our hero promiſing, if he was ſo fortunate as to find her, to bring her ſafe to her father in town.

On their arrival at the farm-houſe, Mrs. Collet cried and ſcolded alternately. At laſt they gathered from her that

that the young man had ſet out in purſuit of Fanny Wilſon, the inſtant he learned her father had taken her to London. She ſeverely reproached her brother for his barbarity; nor could all he ſaid convince her of the duplicity of Mr. Waters's conduct, or that there was any reaſon to fear his honour. Very little ſatisfied, they went together to Dorcheſter; and finding, on the ſtricteſt enquiries, no carriage had paſſed that anſwered their deſcription, they determined to croſs Shillingford-bridge: there they were informed a gentleman and lady in a chaiſe and four were gone towards Reading. They followed with the utmoſt expedition, traced them through Wallingford; but, on their arrival at Reading, found the chaiſe had gone through

through the laſt turnpike empty: and it being too late to proſecute their enquiries that night, they gave up their ſearch, though unwillingly; and endeavoured to procure that reſt they both ſtood in ſo much need of.

CHAP. VIII.

OUR hero had learned from Mr. Wilſon during the journey, to his infinite ſurprize, that the young man's name was Fennel: and ſuppoſing him to be one of the family from which he had ſo lately parted, he endeavoured to leſſen the diſtracted father's ſcruples, by aſſuring him that, if his ſuſpicions were right, the Fennels' family were not ſo very great, as to be at all injured by his alliance; and that, ſhould they be ſo fortunate as to find the fugitives, he would, with his permiſſion, uſe ſuch arguments as he doubted not would induce young Fennel

Fennel to marry her inſtantly; and as the poor girl was really attached to him, and had been ſo long in his power, he thought it the beſt method they could purſue, to make all parties happy, and ſave her reputation, which this elopement muſt unavoidably injure: and to this propoſal the old man gladly aſſented.

The next morning their ſearch was renewed; when, on the road to Newbury, they met Harry Fennel (for it was really him) on horſeback: they inſtantly ſtopped him; and it would be difficult to ſay which he was moſt aſhamed to ſee, the injured father, or Mr. Thornborough; for he was conſcious in how deſpicable a light he muſt ap-

pear. The latter, however, took no notice of that tranſaction; indeed he, at this time, ſcarcely remembered it: ſo anxious was he to repair the injury he had thoughtleſsly committed, that it wholly occupied his thoughts.

When young Fennel had confeſſed where Fanny Wilſon was, and had turned his horſe's head to conduct them to the ſpot; our hero addreſſed him, and begged to ſpeak a few words to him alone: they rode on, therefore, a little way before the father; and he aſked him what his intentions were with reſpect to miſs Wilſon.

Fennel heſitated. At laſt, "I love the girl," ſaid he; "but how can I marry

marry her? She has at preſent nothing, nor would my father forgive ſuch a connexion: and, if he did, what he could do for me at preſent would not provide for us. I mean to take orders, as you know; and if I could obtain the promiſe of a ſmall living, why, perhaps, I might marry her."

Mr. Thornborough had ſeveral in his gift, beſides good intereſt, which Fennel knew well enough; but he ſaw through the meaning of this ſpeech, and inſtantly replied:

"As to promiſing you a living, Mr. Fennel, or endeavouring to obtain one for you, my principles would not let me. I have too high an idea of the

duties of a pariſh prieſt, voluntarily to beſtow that office on one who is not (pardon me) at all calculated for it. As to your ſaying, " perhaps you might marry the girl;" the girl, as you call her, would, in my opinion, be much happier without you. But as ſhe is ſimply attached, and my officious folly has thrown her in your power, from which her reputation may ſuffer, I wiſh to ſee you united: and, as I ought to pay for my interpoſition, I will give you with her a promiſſory note for five hundred pounds; which, with what her father can add at preſent, and what her aunt may leave at her death, will altogether make her as good a fortune as you have ever any right to expect. And farther, if you behave to her with that tender-

tenderneſs which her affection undoubtedly deſerves, and will give up your plan of taking orders (and you can have very little hopes of church preferment), I will uſe all my intereſt to procure you ſome place, that may maintain you both comfortably. If you agree to this propoſal, I will venture to enſure her father's conſent, and your own cannot object to it: if not, miſs Wilſon will return directly to London, and you will never ſee her again."

Harry Fennel did not heſitate a moment, but thanked Mr. Thornborough with unfeigned gratitude. Mr. Wilſon joyfully aſſented; and, when they arrived at the cottage where Fanny had been left, her tears were changed to

ſmiles on this happy turn of fortune. She had bitterly lamented her indiſcretion; but now ſeeing only the fair ſide of the proſpect, ſhe rejoiced at the event which had before added to her diſtreſs, by filling her mind with the moſt poignant ſelf reproaches.

This now happy party returned to Mrs. Collet's, where Fanny was to remain till her marriage, which was to take place in a few days. Our hero wrote to Mr. Fennel ſenior, telling him that, as he had been unhappily the means of depriving one of his family of a huſband, he hoped he ſhould now atone for it by providing another with a wife. He adviſed him, as a friend, to make no objection to a match, which, how-

however unequal it might appear at preſent, would certainly be a very eligible one; and was, on the part of his ſon, only the conſequence of his paſt folly, and a reparation he owed a thoughtleſs young woman, whoſe happineſs had been injured, and whoſe reputation wounded, by their imprudent attachment. He concluded his letter by repeating his promiſe of providing for them; a paragraph which had more weight with the father than the three pages of morality which preceded it, and contributed more to ſubdue the reſentment and concern the firſt news of this marriage had raiſed in his breaſt. Mr. Thornborough ſtaid to the wedding, and acted as father to the bride; but immediately after left them, having received the thanks of the

whole party for his generous and active behaviour.

The ſpirit of Benevolent Quixotiſm, with which he ſet out from Thornborough Abbey, had been damped, though not extinguiſhed, by this adventure; in the courſe of which, he had experienced more vexation, fatigue, ſhame, and diſappointment, than he had ever ſuffered before in his whole life. He had promiſed his intereſt to a man, of whom he had not the leaſt opinion; and had given him five hundred pounds, when he firmly believed he had not principle enough to make her happy for whom this gift was intended. Yet, upon a thorough retroſpect of the whole, he could in no one particular accuſe himſelf

of having acted from any motives but ſuch as do honour to the human heart; and, a little conſoled by a ſelf-approving conſcience, he determined to act in future with more caution. The experience he had now gained, taught him that he might be deceived by innocence itſelf, and that he muſt not always judge by appearances. How far he adhered to this rule, will be ſeen in the following pages.

CHAP. IX.

OUR hero arrived in town early in the evening; and, having ſecured a good lodging in Cecil ſtreet, he began to conſider what buſineſs he had in London, and how he ſhould make his entrée into that world, to which he was hitherto a ſtranger. He had not a ſingle acquaintance in London, except Mr. Conway, then member of parliament for a borough where Mr. Thornborough had conſiderable influence; he thought himſelf, therefore, tolerably certain of a favourable reception from him.

Unuſed

Unuſed to the faſhionable hours, he paid his viſit ſo early, that being by miſtake ſhewn into the room where Mrs. and the Miſs Conways were ſitting, they ſuppoſed him to be a perſon on buſineſs to Mr. Conway; and received him with a kind of imperious civility, to which he was wholly unaccuſtomed. They had ſo frequently ſeen men of *ton* who had nothing of elegance or dignity about them, that it is not ſo wonderful they might ſuppoſe Mr. Thornborough (as both were conſpicuous in him) was not of that deſcription; particularly as his dreſs, from being in mourning, had none of the faſhionable eccentricities.

"Pray," ſaid Mrs. Conway to the ſervant,

ſervant, "why was not this gentleman ſhewn into the parlour?"

"My maſter is there engaged in buſineſs, madam," replied the man.

"Then let him know that Mr.——— your name, ſir, if you pleaſe?"

"I have already given it to the ſervant," replied Mr. Thornborough, with an air of more haughtineſs than he uſually aſſumed.

The ladies of this family were high ſpirited and expenſive: from running into every faſhionable exceſs, they had involved Mr. Conway's fortune ſo much, that he now, as his laſt reſource, looked forward

forward with the hope of a place from government; and, for this reaſon, he always voted with the miniſter, let him be who he would: and, as his ſeat in parliament was of the utmoſt conſequence to him, he behaved to all thoſe whoſe intereſt he wiſhed for, with a degree of ſervility bordering on meanneſs; and this frequently made thoſe who were really his inferiors treat him with an impertinent freedom, which little minds are apt to aſſume when they can do it with impunity. Mrs. Conway had too much arrogance in her compoſition, ever to follow her huſband's example: in fact, dreading the effects of his condeſcenſion, ſhe always behaved in the oppoſite extreme; and now continued talking to her

her daughters on their engagements, whilſt our hero ſat by unnoticed.

Mr. Conway, on his entrance, made ten thouſand apologies for having been unfortunately detained ſo many minutes from the pleaſure of waiting on him. "How long, my dear Sir," continued he, "have you been in town? I ſhould have waited on you, moſt aſſuredly, had I known you were here. How did you leave our friends in Berkſhire? all well, I hope? You are now come to make ſome ſtay in London, moſt undoubtedly. I truſt you will give us as much of your time as you can ſpare from your other friends; and ſhew me your good intentions, by taking a family dinner with us to-day, and accompanying Mrs. and

and the miſs Conways to the play this evening."

Here his breath being quite gone, from the volubility of his ſpeech, our hero would have had an opportunity of anſwering ſome of his numerous queſtions, had he not been interrupted by Mrs. Conway, who knew her huſband's uſual method and his ſuper-abundant civilities too well (which were beſtowed equally on all who could ſerve him, be their rank or fortune what it would) to imagine, from this addreſs, our hero of greater conſequence than ſhe had at firſt ſuppoſed him; therefore, with a ſlight inclination of the head, ſhe replied:

"We ſhall be glad of the gentleman's com-

company another day: you forget, Mr. Conway, we are to-night engaged with the ducheſs of C—, and lady L—."

"Well, well," replied Mr. Conway haſtily, "ladies muſt form their own engagements; but, my good friend, you will, I hope, accompany me to-morrow to dinner at the —— tavern, where I ſhall have the pleaſure of introducing you to the moſt elegant and ſelect circle, perhaps, in the kingdom."

Mrs. Conway ſtarted; and now began to imagine Mr. Thornborough was of ſome conſequence, as her huſband would not otherwiſe have promiſed him an introduction to a ſet of gentlemen, who were greatly his own ſuperiors; and felt

ſome

ſome regret at her paſt behaviour: and her opinion was ſtrengthened, when Mr. Conway continued—

"Well, ſir, now you are of age, you will become one of us, I ſuppoſe? But the county, I take it, will be your object; and, as you have now ſuch extenſive property in it, I do not know where they could chuſe a worthier repreſentative."

Our hero replied, "he had no intention of offering himſelf a candidate either for the county, or any borough in it; though his vote and intereſt would be always, he believed, on the ſide of the preſent miniſter, whilſt he continued to behave with that rectitude and diſintereſtedneſs which

which had hitherto marked his character."

"Ah, ſir, you are perfectly right; I always vote on that ſide: yes, yes, I ſee you are a clever young man. But, ſir, in my joy at ſeeing you again, I poſitively quite forgot Mrs. Conway had never that honour before. Sir--- Mrs. Conway, and the miſs Conways. My dear—Mr. Thornborough, of Thornborough Abbey."

This ſpeech acted like magic on the whole party, for they had all heard of Mr. Thornborough, and his great eſtate. The young ladies held up their heads; and the mother, with a bow and ſmile, ſaid ſhe hoped to have the honour of ſeeing

ing him frequently; and aſſured him, if ſhe had behaved with inattention, it was entirely to be attributed to her not knowing who he was. And, in return, he aſſured her he believed *that* was *really* the reaſon. He ſpoke with an emphaſis which, however, ſhe did not think proper to take in the light he intended, but inſtantly preſſed him to dine that day. This, however, he reſolutely refuſed, and was almoſt going to plead an engagement for the next: but recollecting Mr. Conway at leaſt had not offended him; and that if he waited to meet with thoſe who conſidered the merits of their acquaintance only, and paid no reſpect to rank or fortune, he muſt live wholly without ſociety---he determined to accept it; and Mr. Conway appointed the hour

when he would take him up. After a little more general converſation, our hero took leave, and left the whole family deeply involved in regret and confuſion.

"It was very ſtrange he would not tell me his name," ſaid the lady, when the door was ſhut; "I ſhould then have known how to behave: but, Lucy, you was abſolutely rude to him."

"I am ſure, mamma," replied Lucy, "it was your fault originally; for had I conceived it poſſible for him to be a man of faſhion, I ſhould have turned my chair, and made room for him by the fire; but you behaved ſo odd, I thought I ſhould follow your example."

"For

"For my part," ſaid miſs Conway, "I thought it had been one of my papa's country voters, ſo I never looked at him at all till I was told his name: and, if I had, I ſhould not have gueſſed him to be Mr. Thornborough; for I had always heard he was a poor ſtupid thing, awkward, baſhful, and unfaſhionable; but this is an elegant irreſiſtible young man."

"You obſerved him then, I find, very attentively, Charlotte," ſaid miſs Lucy, "when you did look at him; for my part, I thought him not worth a ſingle glance. Lady Suſan Fermor told me laſt week, ſpeaking of his brother's death, that it was ten thouſand pities ſo fine an eſtate ſhould go to one who knew ſo little

little how to make a figure with it as William Thornborough, who had been bred up by an old uncle among dried bats, preſerved beetles, and pickled ſcorpions."

"Lady Suſan," interrupted Mr. Conway, who re-entered the room juſt time enough to hear the laſt ſpeech, "would give half her fortune for the certainty of changing her name to Thornborough, let her ſay what ſhe will. But you ladies have now no chance of making an impreſſion on his heart; he is, I can ſee, thoroughly diſpleaſed, and you muſt take the conſequences of your own folly."

Whilſt the ladies were diſputing who was moſt to blame in this affair, our hero,

as

as he walked penſively along, much diſconcerted at his reception from the female part of the family he had juſt quitted, began ſeriouſly to conſider the cauſe. Few young men had ſo little vanity; yet he could not avoid ſeeing he was far ſuperior to many who were yet more favoured by the world, and had almoſt as many advantages as the excellent model he wiſhed to copy—Sir Charles Grandiſon.

But Sir Charles, exclaimed he mentally, as he entered his apartment, and ſeated himſelf by his ſolitary fire, had a family, a houſe, and an eſtabliſhment: thoſe who moſt reſpected his virtues, were perhaps firſt attracted by his appearance; whilſt I am unknown, unconnected, and uneſteemed. He then de-

termined to write inſtantly to his ſteward, to ſend him up his carriage and ſervants; and reſolved, in the interim, to look out for a ready-furniſhed houſe, and live in ſtyle.

But this reſolution was ſcarcely formed, when he aſked himſelf if it was conſiſtent with the plan of benevolence he had formed; and how, amidſt the diſſipation of the gay world, he could meet with thoſe objects of diſtreſs he ſo much wiſhed to relieve. The enthuſiaſm which his late adventure had baniſhed, now returned upon his mind with double force; and he found in it a conſolation and relief from the inſupportable fatigue of faſhionable life, and the extreme inſipidity of faſhionable converſation, which he

he had formed his idea of from the Conways, who certainly were not calculated to prepoſſeſs him in its favour. This again altered his plan, and he reſolved to ſtay in London a fortnight or three weeks; then take a journey---perhaps return to Thornborough Abbey, and reviſit the capital with Mr. Fitzwilliam, under whoſe patronage he thought it poſſible he might be introduced to ſome reaſonable and pleaſant ſociety; and, fixed on this, he retired to reſt, after having ſpent the remainder of the day in alternately revolving theſe ſchemes in his mind.

CHAP. X.

HE roſe early the next morning, and amuſed himſelf by walking through ſome of the new ſtreets, to which he was a ſtranger, till it was time to dreſs. Soon after the time appointed, Mr. Conway called in his chariot, and conveyed him to the —— tavern, where the greateſt part of the company were already aſſembled when our hero was introduced. He was received with the utmoſt attention and politeneſs; and many of the gentlemen, in the courſe of the day, expreſſed a wiſh that his ſtay in London would permit him to attend their meeting

ing regularly. He thanked them, but was by no means inclined to join his wiſhes to theirs, as the general ſtyle of their converſation was wholly unſuitable to him: cards, racing, bets, and the genealogies of horſes, engroſſed it almoſt entirely; and he would have been moſt inſupportably weary but for the attentions of Sir John Moleſworth, who, from his firſt entrance, had attached himſelf to him.

Sir John was a man of good ſenſe, and polite learning; he was a pleaſant poet, and a perfect gentleman; of an eaſy and cheerful diſpoſition; had a large family of children, and two or three girls grown up. Mr. Thornborough felt pleaſed with his frankneſs; and his converſation was,

without diſpute, ſuperior to any he had met with ſince he had been at Beech Park. They parted not without a promiſe of meeting frequently, and Mr. Thornborough engaged to dine with him the next day in Argyll ſtreet.

Lady Moleſworth had been a beauty, and was ſtill a fine woman; it was her perſon which won the affection of Sir John, as ſhe had not the leaſt fortune. Upon the death of her father, which happened about eight months before our hero's introduction to the family, her ſiſter, who was only a few years younger than herſelf, and ſtill unmarried, was left totally deſtitute. Sir John had good-humouredly deſired ſhe would accept an aſylum with them; an offer which ſhe gladly

gladly accepted. But from various circumſtances it proved little more than a ſhelter, excepting that ſhe was ſupported at their table; for nothing could be more unpleaſant than her reſidence with them. Sir John had great eaſe and good humour, but no delicacy of ſentiment; it was not therefore viſible to him that ſhe was upon a different footing from the reſt of the family. Lady Moleſworth had always a command of money: and he could not doubt but, as ſhe had his permiſſion, her ſiſter received the benefits of it; and that the recluſe way in which ſhe lived was her own choice.

But here he was miſtaken: her ladyſhip ſpent ſo much upon herſelf and daughters, and played ſo high, that miſs

Ellis had no advantages but from ſome of her old clothes; which, with her own ſtock, was very inſufficient for her to appear in a proper ſtyle as lady Moleſworth's ſiſter. She therefore choſe to ſeclude herſelf as much as poſſible; and only came into company when it happened to be a ſmall party: and this being the caſe when our hero dined there, he was at firſt very much perplexed to gueſs who that lady could be, to whom he had not been introduced, as he was to the reſt of the family, ſeparately—to miſs Moleſworth, miſs Louiſa, and miſs Clementina, who were all fine ſhewy girls, though not handſome.

Miſs Ellis ſat at the lower end of the table, next Sir John; who, as well as her

her ladyſhip, addreſſed her ſometimes, when they wiſhed her to carve a chicken, or help the ſauce. Mr. Thornborough was placed between the two eldeſt ladies, who kept him ſo fully in converſation about new plays, and new operas, that he had no opportunity of even hearing the name by which this forlorn being was called, till dinner was ended; when lady Moleſworth ſaid, "I wiſh, miſs Ellis, you would order the children to come in." Miſs Ellis obeyed; and, for ſome time, our hero fancied ſhe might be the governeſs: but this he ſtill thought improbable; as, in that caſe, ſhe would have been with the children.

When they made their appearance, however, all his doubts were removed,

by the youngeſt running up to her, and crying out in a loud voice, "Oh, dear aunt Kitty, how came you to have mamma's bonnet on?" The poor lady bluſhed at this queſtion, and avoided a direct anſwer; and lady Moleſworth, calling the little girl, gave her a box on the ear, and told her to leave the room.

All this paſſed not unnoticed by our hero; who, though he pretended to be deeply attending to miſs Clementina, could not help hearing the whole; and gueſſed, from the mother's ungentle reproof, the poor child had only ſpoken the truth: and the diſguſt he had before felt at their neglect of the lady, was conſiderably heightened when he found in

how near a degree of relationſhip ſhe ſtood.

The bonnet which had attracted the attention of the child, was indeed ſingular enough; it was one lady Moleſworth had for her mourning---the gauze was ſtill broad hemmed—and miſs Ellis, whoſe taſte it muſt be owned bordered a little on the fantaſtical, had intermixed large bows of roſe-coloured ribband with the black that ſtill remained; and this had a worſe effect from the bonnet's being really dirty.

But this diſcovery had an effect on our hero, which proved him not a man of faſhion: he felt deeply intereſted for miſs Ellis; and, as ſoon as their removal into the drawing-room

gave him an opportunity, he left the young ladies, and placed himſelf by the aunt, whoſe converſation was ſenſible and pleaſant, and would have been lively but from the depreſſion of her ſpirits. Accuſtomed to much attention in the town where ſhe had lived with her father, who was conſidered as one of the firſt people in it, though his place was only ſufficient to ſupport his family, ſhe was the more ſuſceptible of the mortifications ſhe now experienced; and could not in the leaſt imagine why Mr. Thornborough, whoſe conſequence ſhe was not ignorant of, ſhould pay her ſo much reſpect: yet, pleaſed and animated by it, ſhe diſplayed in the courſe of the evening ſo much good ſenſe, and bore with ſuch patient

patient mildneſs the ſlights and even the rudeneſs ſhe met with, that our hero began to meditate, according to his uſual plan, how he could relieve her from this cruel ſtate of dependance.

The young ladies were very ill pleaſed with his behaviour; and failed not to ſhew it by ſome pointed, and, as they thought, witty ſarcaſms on their aunt: theſe, however, had a very different effect from what they intended; as they ſerved only to prove their malice, and her good humour. When he took leave, Sir John (who, as well as her ladyſhip, had his eye on him for one of the girls, and who did not fear their aunt could poſſibly rival them) very

very obligingly and earneſtly preſſed him to renew his viſits frequently; and this he more readily promiſed, from having the idea of a ſcheme in his head, which he hoped time and a little contrivance might accompliſh.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

ON his return to his lodgings, our hero found the houſe in ſome little confuſion, from the maid ſervant's having accidentally broke one of the windows in his apartment, in ſuch a manner, that it was impoſſible for him to ſleep in the room; and this happening too late to get it mended, the miſtreſs, with many apologies to him, and many reproofs to the girl, begged he would excuſe being for that night removed one ſtory higher. As this was a matter of no conſequence to him, he willingly aſſented; and accordingly, when it was ready,

ready, took poſſeſſion of his new apartment: but, inſtead of going to bed, he ſat down and began writing to Mr. Harford.

In this letter he deſcribed Miſs Ellis and her ſituation; ſpoke of her underſtanding and manners in the higheſt terms; and ſaid, as he was anxious to marry, he did not know any woman who would ſo probably ſuit him; and, from the obligations ſhe muſt feel to any one who would take her from ſo terrible a ſtate of dependance, he thought there was little doubt of her making an obedient wife. He expatiated very warmly on the behaviour ſhe met with from the family: and concluded by adviſing him to come up to town, when he might

might have an opportunity of judging how far he approved of this recommendation, as he would introduce him at the baronet's; though he aſſured him, on his honour, he had dropped no hint of the kind, either to the lady herſelf, or any part of the family. At all events he begged an immediate anſwer; as nothing but the hope of promoting the happineſs of two people apparently worthy of each other, and one of whom he had the honour of calling his friend, would have power to detain him in town; as he was already weary of it, and wiſhed to return to the country.

Whilſt he was writing, he was frequently diſturbed by a low and indiſtinct murmur, which at intervals broke

broke upon the ſilence of the night, for the family had all been quiet ſome time: but, juſt as he was ſealing his letter, he was alarmed by hearing ſome perſon in the next chamber, who ſeemed in an agony of grief; yet ſtifling, as it were, the ſobs which they could not ſubdue. Shocked at this ſound of grief, he roſe from the table, and went ſoftly to a door which opened from his apartment to the other, but was locked on the inſide, to endeavour to learn, if poſſible, the cauſe of this violent agitation: but obſerving a light through one of the crevices, and conſcious of the integrity of his motive, he ſcrupled not applying his eyes to it; and he beheld a young girl about ſeventeen ſitting at a bureau, with papers ſpread before her, and her handker-

handkerchief at her eyes. She continued weeping for a few minutes; then, taking up a letter, ſhe began reading what follows, in a voice loud enough for him to hear every word diſtinctly:

"Yes, my beloved Emmelinda, I feel it vain and uſeleſs to ſtruggle any longer with the cruelty of my fate, which has placed an inſuperable, an unconquerable, and an inſurmountable bar betwixt me and the dear object of my affections. I behold him in dreams, I ſee his fair form in fancied fields of fragrant flowers. Amiable Albert! thou art ever dear to thy faithful Laura, and dear thou ſhalt be even in the ſhades. In the azure regions of the ſky we may meet, though this terraqueous globe denies

nies us that felicity. Oh Albert! perhaps at this moment thou art daſhing on ſome rock, or rolling on ſome billow; yet, however perilous thy ſituation, 'tis your Laura alone that engroſſes your thoughts: and in this, charming youth! we aſſimilate; for now whilſt the dagger trembles in my hand, and I ſeize with avidity the inſtrument of death, to relieve me from inſupportable afflictions, even now I repeat---My heart only ſighs for thee; and ſhrinks only at the horror you will feel when you hear my ſad fate, if you ſhould live to hear it.

"Ah, my beloved Emmelinda! forgive the wildneſs of my expreſſions; yet I can only think on this ſubject. His image haunts me in the dark ſhades of night,

night, when the feeble taper faintly emits a dying ray. Adieu, much loved friend! Whilſt the lamp ſtruggles in the ſocket, the too ſenſible and too ſuſceptible ſoul of your Laura flies to meet her Albert in another ſphere."

Whilſt ſhe was reading this letter, our hero, who was ſhocked and agitated by the intention expreſſed in it, accidentally preſſing the door, moved it ſufficiently to ſhake a gown which was hanging on a pin on the other ſide. When ſhe had finiſhed, looking up, and obſerving it move, her fancy was ſo raiſed, and her mind ſo impreſſed with horror, that ſhe actually ſuppoſed it was owing to ſome ſupernatural power: and the inſtant

ſtant ſhe had laid down the paper, gave a loud ſcream; and riſing inſtantly, flew to the bed-ſide. This action was obſerved by Mr. Thornborough; who not knowing the cauſe, and forgetting he could not be ſeen, imagined ſhe had an idea of ſome perſons obſerving her, and feared they would endeavour to prevent her from putting her terrible purpoſe in execution, and therefore flew with an intention of haſtening it. He then ſhook the door with a violence that added to her terror: but finding the lock reſiſted all his efforts, he opened the door of his own room, and attempted that of hers which led to the ſtair-caſe, with ſuch force, that at laſt it yielded; but not till her ſcreams, added to the noiſe, had awakened

ened the whole family, who aſſembled in the paſſage juſt as he had completed his purpoſe.

He inſtantly ran into the room: and ſeizing both her hands, led or rather dragged the poor girl, who was incapable of ſpeaking, amidſt the family; and turning to the miſtreſs of the houſe, begged her to take care of her: and then thanked Heaven for permitting him to be the inſtrument of ſaving her from deſtruction. She had now fainted entirely; and whilſt ſome of the people were endeavouring to recover her, and running for drops, others attempted to learn from our hero the cauſe of all this confuſion. He only replied by begging them by no means to leave her alone

alone that night; and he would explain his reaſons, and the cauſe of this, in the morning.

The fact was, he did not chooſe to mention his ſuſpicions before ſo many people, as he feared it would be an injury to the poor young creature: hoping this terrible intention aroſe from ſome particular depreſſion of mind, which might be counteracted by advice or aſſiſtance; both of which he meant to offer her the next day, when ſhe was tolerably compoſed.

But the inſtant ſhe recovered ſufficiently to ſpeak at all, the landlady deſired to know the meaning of this affair, and how Mr. Thornborough had ſaved her

her from deſtruction. She anſwered, ſhe believed the gentleman was either out of his ſenſes, or a very wicked man; for that, as to pretending he had ſaved her from any thing, it was a joke; for that nothing had frightened her at all, till he attempted to break open the door which was between their rooms; and that upon her ſcreaming, which ſhe did in a violent manner, he ran round to the other door, which, having a ſlighter lock, he ſoon broke open; with what intention he could only tell. Mrs. Bennet and her huſband now turned angrily to our hero; who, with all the fortitude of innocence, advanced, and prevented their ſpeaking, by addreſſing the ſtill trembling girl in the following manner:

"Happy as I have hitherto conſidered myſelf, young lady, in ſaving you from the commiſſion of an act no repentance can recall, I am now ſhocked at the effrontery with which you deny your knowledge of the cauſe of my (I confeſs) abrupt entrance into your chamber; from conſidering it as a proof that you mean only to delay the execution of your terrible intention, and not wholly give it up. And I am greatly hurt, though not in an equal degree, at your aſcribing my interference to motives ſo wholly different from thoſe which really actuated me. And, though I did not intend to make them public at this time, yet, in my own juſtification, I muſt now lay them before the company."

The

The poor girl ſtood aghaſt at an accuſation ſhe did not in the leaſt comprehend: but declaring ſhe could not imagine what he meant, deſired he would inſtantly explain himſelf; which he was juſt going to do, when the appearance of an old gentlewoman prevented him. She was about ſeventy years old; and with the aſſiſtance of a ſtick and a maid's arm, and incited by curioſity, ſhe had juſt reached the top of the ſtairs, wrapt in flannel from head to foot, and a long black ſilk cloak on, with the hood up. She ſeated herſelf on a trunk which happened to be in the paſſage; and throwing back the hood of her cloak, that ſhe might the better ſee and hear all that was going forward, our hero no ſooner had a view of her face, than, for-

getting his defence, he flew towards her, and locked her in his arms, to the utter aſtoniſhment and diſmay of the whole aſſembly.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

"AH! poor gentleman," cried Mrs. Bennet ſoftly, "he is mad to be ſure; ſo we need not enquire any farther for the cauſe of this buſtle." But when ſhe obſerved the old lady returned his embrace with equal fervour, ſhe muſt have imagined the frenzy was contagious, had not an explanation taken place inſtantly.

It was, in fact, no other than the very Mrs. Maſon who was Mr. Trevors's houſe-keeper, and had the care of our hero in his infancy; and who, till this

unexpected meeting, had not ſeen him ſince her leaving Devonſhire; and as ſhe loved him with an affection truly maternal, and he was really attached to her, it was no wonder their mutual expreſſions of ſatisfaction ſhould aſtoniſh the company, till they had learned the cauſe.

To account for Mrs. Maſon's ſudden appearance here, I muſt inform my readers, ſhe had left London upon her ſiſter's removal, and ſettled with her at Richmond; and had come up to town for a few days that very afternoon, to ſtay with Mrs. Bennet, who was her niece by marriage. She ſlept in the back-parlour; but was alarmed by the firſt outcry, and would come up ſtairs to hear how this

ſtory

ſtory really was; for the maid had given her an imperfect account of a gentleman's attempting to get into miſs Darley's apartment. Miſs Darley was a kind of ward of Mr. Bennet's, who had been with an eminent mantua-maker; but being at preſent out of her time, ſhe was ſtaying with them till ſhe could either ſet up for herſelf in ſome country town, or engage as a journey-woman.

When Mrs. Maſon had declared her knowledge of Mr. Thornborough, and ſaid ſhe would venture her life upon his not being guilty of an improper or an impertinent action; that ſhe was ſure there muſt have been ſome ſad miſtake, and called upon him to clear himſelf:

He then once more began, and related every circumſtance as they appeared to him; and aſſured the whole party, upon his honour, it was merely to prevent her from executing the terrible intention he had ſo much reaſon to believe ſhe had determined upon, from her agitation, as well as from the letter ſhe read, which he ſuppoſed was to be left for ſome friend.

Mrs. Bennet then turned to miſs Darley, and enquired what Mr. Thornborough meant: "Is it true, Nancy, that——"

"Oh! no, indeed," cried ſhe, haſtily; "the gentleman was in an error: yet, I cannot wonder at his miſtake." She then

then confeſſed, that, having always loved reading and writing better than working, ſhe had, whilſt with her late miſtreſs, employed all her leiſure hours in peruſing novels of every deſcription; and at laſt began to think ſhe was perfectly well qualified to commence authoreſs herſelf: that having very lately met with the Sorrows of Werter, ſhe was ſtruck with the language and ſtory, and fancied ſhe could make one upon the ſame model, juſt as good; only, by way of variety, it was her *heroine* who was to play Werter, upon ſome diſappointment in love. Not hearing any noiſe in Mr. Thornborough's apartment, ſhe ſuppoſed he was aſleep, and therefore ventured to read the letter from Laura to Emmelinda previous to her death,

aloud, that ſhe might be the better judge how far ſhe had ſucceeded in the pathetic. Her own tears flowed only from her ſympathizing heart, which deeply felt for the diſtreſs ſhe had ſo exquiſitely wrought up: and this it was which contributed to deceive Mr. Thornborough.

"I am ſure," continued the poor girl, "could I have foreſeen this confuſion, I would not have read ſo loud: but not imagining I had been overheard, Mr. Thornborough's abrupt entrance, and repeated efforts to break the door, terrified me ſo much, that I believe I ſhall never forget it."

The company in general received her apology

apology with complacency: but Mrs. Bennet ſeverely reproved her; in the firſt inſtance, for miſpending her time by reading ſuch traſh; in the next, for ſitting up to write when the family were aſleep, as ſhe might ſet the houſe on fire; and laſtly, for miſtaking her talents ſo much, as to fancy ſhe could write any thing worth reading.

Mr. Thornborough joined in this laſt opinion, from the ſpecimen he had heard: but, unwilling to mortify her by a declaration of his ſentiments, he only ſaid, with a mock gravity of countenance, which would have been highly entertaining, had any of the party underſtood the powers of ridicule: "Permit me, madam, only to hope you will not again

ſhew your talents in the pathetic, in ſuch a way as to diſturb a whole family. It has proved by far too acute for my feelings; and, from the congeniality of my ſoul, the ſcene you ſo accurately deſcribed became in my idea perſonified, and cauſed me, thus unfortunately yielding to the immediate impulſe of compaſſion, to awaken the ſenſibility and diſturb the peaceful ſlumbers of all this company. Their pardon I once more entreat; and beg you to accept my beſt wiſhes for the ſucceſs of your work; and, if it ſhould be publiſhed by ſubſcription, I requeſt you will do me the honour of adding my name to the liſt of thoſe who patronize it."

Miſs Darley, who took all he ſaid for a high

a high compliment, made him a low curtſey, and thanked him very much for his approbation. Peace being thus reſtored, the party ſeparated, after our hero had promiſed Mrs. Maſon to devote two or three hours to her in the morning, to inform her of all that had paſſed ſince they parted.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

WHEN our hero had diſpatched his letter to Mr. Harford, and fulfilled his promiſe to Mrs. Maſon, whom he invited to breakfaſt, the buſineſs of the day was at an end, and he had only to think of its pleaſures. Theſe were more than he expected. He dined at ſir John Moleſworth's, and was there introduced to a Mr. Godfrey, a young officer on half-pay, whoſe manners were prepoſſeſſing, and more congenial, as he thought, to his own, than any he had hitherto met with. They ſoon became extremely intimate,

intimate, and for ſome days ſpent the greateſt part of their time together.

One morning, as they were walking in the Park, the miſs Conways paſſed them. Mr. Thornborough made a very ſlight bow, which the ladies returned with much complacency, and a ſmile, which, had it been tranſlated, would have expreſſed—"You have been very cruel in abſenting yourſelf ſo long. Believe me, when next you viſit Park ſtreet, you ſhall have no reaſon to complain of your reception." And in this ſenſe our hero read it, but without effect; his heart was marble to any impreſſion the Conways would have made on it.

"You

"You tell me," ſaid Mr. Godfrey, "you are new to the manners of the world: but, on my word, you are as complete an adept in the faſhionable nonchalance of the age, as if you had never lived out of the circle of St. James's. How otherwiſe could you have bowed with that frigid indifference to the fair Conways, who honoured you with peculiar notice? for haughtineſs and reſerve are the leading features in their characters."

"Whilſt that is the caſe," replied Mr. Thornborough, "indifference will ever mark mine: but Heaven forbid I ſhould in general poſſeſs that nonchalance you do me too much honour in aſcribing to me; for my heart is as yet unſkilled

ſkilled in the ways of faſhion, and has not learned to feign what it does not feel; and I ſhould be really ſorry if it was cold to all alike: but pride and inſolence I ſhall ever return with diſdain and contempt; and you have now the true reaſon of my behaviour." He then proceeded to acquaint him with the circumſtances which attended his firſt viſit to Mr. Conway's; and had ſcarcely finiſhed the recital, when that gentleman came up, and enquired of our hero, why he had not ſeen him for ſo many days. He made ſome ſlight apology, and promiſed to call the firſt opportunity. Mr. Conway then aſked him to dine the next day, which Mr. Thornborough conſented to conditionally; as he thought it was not impoſſible but

Mr.

Mr. Harford might come up to town, in conſequence of his letter; and he had determined to introduce him immediately at ſir John Moleſworth's.

Mr. Conway then took leave, after expreſſing his extreme hopes that his friend would not arrive ſo ſoon, as it would prevent him from having the honour, the pleaſure, and the happineſs, of his company to dinner.

The two friends continued their walk, and, the converſation taking the ſame turn, our hero expreſſed himſelf in the following manner:

"Perhaps, Mr. Godfrey, when I am a little more accuſtomed to the world, I may

I may not feel the diſguſt I now do at the reſpect which is ſo conſtantly paid to rank and fortune, and to rank and fortune only; for merit is wholly out of the queſtion. I feel I can never eſteem the Conways; yet, believe me, I do not reſent their behaviour, I only regard it with contempt: yet I may be wrong, for where ſhall I find it otherwiſe? You will think me ridiculous, I am ſure, when I confeſs I could almoſt wiſh, ſometimes, that fortune had been leſs liberal of her favours to me; then I might diſtinguiſh my real friends. As it is, I am convinced I ſhall never marry; for though I have the higheſt opinion of the happineſs of that ſtate, where the ſouls are in uniſon with each other; yet I ſhould ſo frequently fancy the lady to whom

whom my heart was devoted might be actuated by motives different from my own, that the idea would poſſibly at times preſs upon my mind, and injure my tranquillity, if not wholly deſtroy it."

"You are very eccentric, indeed," replied Mr. Godfrey; "but a little more knowledge of life will teach you to ſet a higher and juſter value upon your own perfections than you do at preſent: and when that is the caſe, you will not ſo readily fancy the ladies can find no attractions in you but what ariſe from your fortune."

The converſation was here interrupted by another gentleman, who joined them, and

and continued walking with them till they parted.

When Mr. Godfrey returned to his own apartments, he began to revolve in his mind all that had paſſed. Mr. Thornborough's confeſſion of the peculiarity of his ſentiments, added to what he had before ſeen, and often heard of his character, induced him to ſuppoſe it would be no difficult matter, if he played his cards well, to make a property of him. A ſcheme ſoon darted into his head, and he determined to introduce it the next time they met.

Mr. Godfrey had had a good education, as the world terms it; but he had not one principle of honour or integrity: he

he was thought a moral man, becauſe his head was cool and ſteady; and he was not particularly addicted to any faſhionable irregularities: but this was owing to his not having a fortune to diſſipate, and his wiſh of ſucceeding in life, which he knew depended upon the propriety of his behaviour; but his heart was deſigning, and Self was the idol he worſhipped.

"Touch not, good ſir, a hair of mine,
"And you may ſcalp my neighbour—"

Was his favourite maxim, for he never aſſiſted a perſon in any kind of diſtreſs, but when he had ſome particular view in it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

IN the mean time, Mr. Thornborough, unconſcious of the deſigns of his new acquaintance, and happy in the benevolent plan he had formed, waited with impatience for an anſwer from Mr. Harford: but that gentleman arrived in perſon, as ſoon as he poſſibly could after the receipt of his letter. Our hero welcomed him with an unfeigned ſatisfaction, and inſtantly acquainted him with the whole ſcheme; to which he liſtened with evident ſatisfaction, declaring, he was totally weary of the ſolitary life he had now led for ſo many months: and

Mr.

Mr. Thornborough inſtantly propoſed to him to viſit ſir John Moleſworth; and he aſſented.

On their arrival in Argyll-ſtreet, he introduced Mr. Harford as his particular friend; and he was of courſe received by the baronet with the utmoſt politeneſs: and he invited both the gentlemen to dinner the next day; an invitation which accorded too well with their plans, not to be accepted. Miſs Ellis was not in the room; and Mr. Harford was diſappointed: for he felt ſome curioſity to ſee the lady with whom he thought it poſſible he might ſpend his future life.

Our hero, to prevent any diſagreeable impreſſion

impreſſion which the ſingularity of her appearance might make at the firſt ſight, prepared him for it, by deſcribing her dreſs, and mentioning the circumſtance which had occurred during his laſt viſit, with reſpect to the bonnet, to account for it. But whether miſs Ellis was prepared for the arrival of this gentleman, by a converſation which paſſed that day at table, or whether it was merely accidental, I cannot pretend to decide; but on the following ſhe appeared in the dining-parlour, in a ſtyle of dreſs perfectly plain, but neat and ſimple, without any of that flouriſh and affected diſplay of finery which uſually diſtinguiſhed her. Mr. Harford was by this very agreeably ſurpriſed; and, her perſon appearing to uncommon ad-

vantage from it, he actually thought her handſome, and that his friend had done her great injuſtice by his deſcription.

Mr. Thornborough, to give him the more frequent opportunities of engaging her in converſation, voluntarily placed himſelf, at dinner, by the miſs Moleſworths; and being in particular good ſpirits, from the hope which animated his mind, they were more than ever pleaſed with him: and lady Moleſworth, entertaining an idea that one of her daughters might poſſibly engage his affections, was remarkably good-humoured; and, to give her a plea for detaining him the whole evening, propoſed a party at unlimited loo. The gentlemen aſſenting, the cards were produced;

duced; when Mr. Thornborough hearing miſs Ellis was not to join their party, became extremely diſconcerted, and the more ſo when her ladyſhip, in reply to an enquiry of Mr. Harford's, addreſſed to her ſiſter, ſaid, not ſuffering her to ſpeak, "Oh, my dear ſir, it will not ſuit miſs Ellis's purſe to play unlimited loo with us, I aſſure you."

"But it ſhall, my dear madam," cried our hero, with a pleaſantry he aſſumed, to conceal his indignation: "for we will, with the lady's leave, go partners; and I always win."

"You do," ſaid lady Moleſworth: "very well, ſir; we ſhall be afraid of you."

Miſs Ellis, hurt at her ſiſter's manner, at firſt refuſed: but Mr. Thornborough, with a vivacity and delicacy peculiar to himſelf, perſuaded her to comply in ſuch a way that ſhe knew not how to refuſe.

When they were ſeated, "I could not," ſaid Mr. Harford, "make the ſame requeſt to any lady; for I am always unfortunate at cards. I hope, however, according to the old rule, fate has a bleſſing in ſtore for me in a good wife." As he ſaid this, he looked at miſs Ellis with ſo much earneſtneſs, that ſhe coloured extremely; though ſhe ſcarcely dared flatter herſelf he meant any thing by it but mere gallantry.

Mr.

Mr. Thornborough exerted himſelf ſo much, that he pleaſed every body, and put them all in ſpirits and good humour: and miſs Ellis was more animated by Mr. Harford's attentions, than ſhe had been by our hero's; as his youth, fortune, perſon, and accompliſhments forbad any idea of the poſſibility of making a conqueſt. But here the caſe was wholly different. Mr. Harford was an elderly man; plain, but not rough in his manners: his appearance like a gentleman, though without elegance: and his perſon, though not handſome, was yet far from the reverſe; and there was a good humour in his aſpect, which atoned for the want of information and brilliancy.

Miſs Ellis could frame no objections to him; and ſhe almoſt rejoiced that he was not more ſtriking, as ſhe could then have had no hope of ſucceſs.

The evening paſſed off very pleaſantly; and when the gentlemen returned home, our hero, to his great ſatisfaction, learned that his friend was perfectly ſatisfied with the appearance and converſation of the lady; and readily promiſed to go, the next morning, to Argyll-ſtreet, and make in his name formal propoſals, which he had no doubt would be joyfully accepted.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

TO dwell no longer on a ſubject which has already engroſſed too much time, I will only inform my reader, that every thing ſucceeded to our hero's utmoſt wiſh. Miſs Ellis conſented to marry Mr. Harford; and ſir John and lady Moleſworth both rejoiced at the idea of being releaſed from what they had long conſidered as an incumbrance, and approved of the connexion highly; and before Mr. Thornborough left town, he had the pleaſure of ſeeing the marriage in a fair train: but, as his friend was now much engaged in Argyll-ſtreet,

whither he did not always wiſh to accompany him, he again mixed with the ſociety from which Mr. Harford's arrival had at firſt eſtranged him; and Mr. Godfrey had an opportunity of executing his plan.

"I have," ſaid the latter (one morning when they were alone), "been meditating on what paſſed between us ſome time ſince; and, in conſequence of it, an idea came into my head: but, it is ſo ridiculous, I ſcarcely know how to mention it; and has ſo much of the ſpirit of Quixotiſm in it, that even you, eccentric as you are, muſt, I am ſure, laugh at me."

"Let

"Let me hear it, however," replied Mr. Thornborough.

"Why," continued he, heſitating, "you ſaid the other day, you could never marry, from the fear of not meeting a diſintereſted woman. What think you of our ſetting out together in ſearch of adventures, like Archer and Aimwell; only with a more innocent deception, for you ſhall be Godfrey, and I will be Thornborough. Under my name, and in the character of a dependant, you will be a better judge of the truth of the civilities you will experience; and my life for it, with your addreſs, figure, and accompliſhments, you will captivate the heart of

ſome fair lady, who will then prove, beyond all poſſibility of diſpute,

"She loves you for yourſelf alone."

Whilſt I, as Mr. Thornborough, ſhall have, no doubt, ſufficient merit to gain the approbation of the ſex in general; and when we re-aſſume our native characters, ſhould there be a ſingle one among the number generous enough to retain her partiality, I ſhall be as happy as yourſelf, and equally fortunate."

Our hero ſmiled at this propoſal; and reflecting on it a few minutes, he thought it might determine his future happineſs, and at leaſt could be of no ill conſequence; but would, at all events, afford him

him ſome variety, and probably give him a better opportunity of executing his benevolent plan, than he could have under his own name, and in ſo public a line of life as he was now engaged in. Not reflecting that, to enſure happineſs, deceptions of every kind ſhould be ſtudiouſly avoided, but ſatisfied in his own mind of its propriety, he acceded with much apparent ſatisfaction; and begged to know where and how this ſcheme was to be proſecuted; as in any place where either of them was known it would be wholly impracticable.

"That point," replied Mr. Godfrey, "is already ſettled. I have for ſome time talked of viſiting B—— in Yorkſhire: and a friend has promiſed me

a letter of recommendation to a Mr. Wilding, a gentleman of the firſt conſequence in the town, where there is, by the way, a very genteel ſociety. I will tell him I ſhall ſet out directly, and deſire he will mention you in his letter, which you ſhall deliver, and introduce me as your friend, Mr. Thornborough. It will be very unfortunate, if, in ſo large a place, we do not meet with ſome amuſement at leaſt."

Our hero, very well pleaſed at the idea, conſented; and the day for the journey and ſome other preliminaries being ſettled, they parted.

Mr. Thornborough ſcrupled the leſs to enter into this ſcheme, from intending,

tending, if he found Mr. Godfrey continued worthy of his friendſhip, to provide ſo handſomely for him in ſome way or other, that, ſhould any lady entertain a real regard for him, the loſs of his ideal eſtate would be of the leſs conſequence. He then ſent and beſpoke a handſome job chariot and horſes, for the occaſion; and ſent for his own phaeton from Berkſhire: but ordered his ſervants to return to the Abbey; and deſired Mr. Godfrey to hire a footman and groom in his name, that the ſecret might be only known to themſelves.

As to that gentleman, he was employing himſelf in a very different manner, contriving how to make the virtues

virtues and foibles of our unguarded hero ſubſervient to his intereſt: and with this view he ſat down and wrote a letter to Mr. Wilding, which will diſcover his intentions to the reader more clearly than any explanation I can poſſibly give.

To Mr. Wilding.

B——, Yorkſhire.

Sir,

I AM too well acquainted with the clearneſs of your underſtanding, and the ſentiments of your heart, to doubt for one moment your entering into the plan I have formed for the benefit of your whole family. You know that I am not ignorant you live

live to the extent of your income, if not beyond it; and that, at your deceaſe, your eldeſt daughter, if not married before, will be left with but a ſlender proviſion, as times go, and in ſome degree dependant on the generoſity of the younger, whoſe fortune, ample as it is at preſent, from the affection of her late aunt, will not bear dividing; at leaſt, to ſupport them in the ſtyle of life to which they have been accuſtomed. Now, my dear ſir, having once had the pleaſure of ſeeing miſs Charlotte Wilding at Bath (but it was in ſo mixed a party, that I am confident ſhe could not recollect me again), I am convinced, could I gain the honour of her hand, I ſhould be the happieſt man in the world: and, if you will

will give your conſent, and uſe your influence with her, which, I am told, is very great (as, notwithſtanding her independance, ſhe has the higheſt, I might ſay, the moſt romantic notions of filial obedience);" I will undertake, if you will follow my inſtructions, to bring down with me a huſband for miſs Wilding, who has an eſtate of between ſeven and eight thouſand a year, and is in every reſpect an unexceptionable young man; handſome and elegant enough to make his fortune, without any advantage ariſing from his eſtate.

Confident of your approbation, and knowing miſs Wilding cannot object to a little harmleſs deception to gain ſuch a prize, I will unfold to you the

the whole ſcheme; and ſhould you think my hopes of ſucceſs are not well grounded, I will engage not to marry miſs Charlotte till I have ſeen her ſiſter and my friend united. Mr. Thornborough, the gentleman in queſtion, I have been lately introduced to; and can affirm from my own knowledge, as well as from that of others, who have been long acquainted with him, that he is perfectly amiable, and would make ſome figure in the world, but that his underſtanding is obſcured by the moſt romantic and ridiculous ideas, and his delicacy ſo extreme, that he has reſolved never to marry, till he can meet with a woman who will love him independant of his fortune and rank in life. In conſequence of this eccentric

and

and abſurd determination, we are going to ſally forth, like a couple of Quixotes, in ſearch of adventures; and B—— is the firſt place of our deſtination.

I tell him I have letters of recommendation to you (for remember I muſt appear as an abſolute ſtranger to you all), which he is to take as Mr. Godfrey, and introduce me as his friend Thornborough. The carriage, &c. are all beſpoke for our expedition; and under his character I will pretend a ſtrong admiration for miſs Wilding, who muſt diſdain my attentions, and on every occaſion ſhew a viſible preference to my friend: this will fix upon his heart an incontrovertible idea of her diſintereſted love; and with her beauty

and

and merit, ſhe muſt meet an adequate return. Piqued at her indifference, I will addreſs her ſiſter, where I hope to be more fortunate: and Mr. Thornborough's diſpoſition is ſo eaſy, and ſo benevolent, the ſettlements may be juſt as you pleaſe: and I am pretty certain he will reward me in ſuch a manner for my ſcheme, that the fair Charlotte will have no wiſh to retract her conſent. But do not at firſt let her into the intricacies of the plot: time enough when the bait has taken. Letitia may be properly prepared againſt our arrival; and tell her, I congratulate her on the proſpect of a coach and ſix. It is a fortunate circumſtance, that miſs Charlotte knows me not perſonally,

as

as her gravity might take alarm at being inſtrumental to the deception.

Farewell, my dear ſir. Let me hear from you by the return of the poſt, as we are ſoon to ſet out, and I muſt firſt know your ſentiments on this ſubject.

T. GODFREY.

This letter met with the moſt perfect approbation from the gentleman to whom it was addreſſed; and his daughter entering warmly into the ſcheme, he returned ſuch an anſwer as highly pleaſed the writer, who now only waited Mr. Thornborough's leiſure to ſet out. That gentleman not only had the ſatisfaction of

of ſeeing his benevolent intention almoſt completed, as Mr. Harford and miſs Ellis both appeared as happy as two people in their ſituation could poſſibly be; but that of having obtained a tolerable place for young Fennel in the cuſtoms, through the intereſt of Mr. Conway.

Unfortunate as his two firſt adventures had proved in ſome reſpects, yet, as they both in a degree had been the means of promoting the happineſs of ſome of the parties, he now conſidered them in a different light, and was induced to go on in his career: but equally credulous and generous, he diſcovered not the plans that were often laid to enſnare him, nor ſaw the ridicule

ridicule to which he was ſo frequently expoſed. Till very lately, he had only known the world by books; and expected more perfection, or at leaſt more ſincerity, than he ever found. A dupe to his own benevolence, he was often obliged to pay handſomely for interfering in the ſchemes of others, though from the beſt motives, when, from the malice of fortune, or his own want of experience, they turned out in a different manner from what he hoped.

Thus continually erring and atoning, he had hitherto met with leſs ſatisfaction in the purſuit of benevolence, than his ſanguine diſpoſition had taught him to expect; but the happy proſpect which now awaited Mr. Harford and miſs

Ellis reconciled him to, and atoned for, his paſt mortifications; and he determined to purſue his plan of life with the ſame avidity with which he had firſt engaged in it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

EVERY thing being in readineſs, our hero ſet out for B—— with Mr. Godfrey, in a chariot and four, of which the latter was the nominal maſter. On their arrival at that town, Mr. Thornborough waited on Mr. Wilding with the letter, and was received with the utmoſt politeneſs; and that gentleman requeſting that he would dine with him the following day, accompanied by his friend, who he found was now with him at B——, he accepted the invitation, and introduced him as Mr. Thornborough.

Though

Though few young men had ſo little vanity or pride as our hero, yet the idea of being conſidered almoſt as dependant on the other, gave him a degree of aukwardneſs he ſcarcely thought he could feel on ſuch an occaſion: but this was in ſome meaſure diſſipated by the equal attention that was paid to both by the whole family, conſiſting of Mr. and Mrs. Wilding, and their two daughters.

The eldeſt was ſtrikingly handſome, had an inſinuating addreſs, with more of ſmartneſs than real faſhion, and ſome vivacity. Charlotte was delicate and intereſting, but had a reſerve in her manner which almoſt amounted to gravity: ſhe ſpoke little; but what ſhe

ſaid had in it a great deal of good ſenſe, and proved her underſtanding had been highly cultivated; and that the attention of her friends had not been thrown away on an ungrateful ſoil.

According to the concerted plan, Mr. Wilding received them as perfect ſtrangers, and introduced them to all the principal families in the town and neighbourhood. It is with grief and ſhame I relate, that, ſuperior as our hero was in every reſpect to his companion, the latter, from his ſuppoſed fortune, met with much the greater ſhare of attention; except from a few, who had the taſte to diſcern his merit, and ſpirit to avow their preference.

Mr.

Mr. Godfrey ſoon began to be very particular to miſs Wilding, who evidently avoided him, and took every opportunity to ſhew how much ſhe preferred the other: and whilſt he reprobated this conduct to the family, in our hero's preſence, as deſtructive to all the hopes he had formed; when they were alone, he never failed to congratulate him upon the conqueſt of ſo innocent and ſo diſintereſted a heart. With his romantic ſentiments, and flattered to a degree by the viſible partiality of her manner, it is no wonder that our hero liſtened with the higheſt ſatisfaction to theſe often-repeated proofs of her attachment: and really admiring her perſon, and being ſufficiently pleaſed with her converſation, he determined, the inſtant his

friend was refuſed, to offer himſelf to her acceptance; and, ſhould her conſent prove the confirmation of his hopes, to reveal the innocent deception, and daſh upon them in all the ſplendour of ſeven thouſand a year.

But whilſt all theſe plans were going forward under Mr. Wilding's roof, a few tranſactions, that were previous to the denouement, muſt here be related. Among the gentlemen who were introduced to the friends, was a Mr. Barrymore, who, with his lady and niece, lived in general at a country ſeat, about ſix miles from B——; but they were now at lodgings in the town for the winter. They were all pleaſant and agreeable; and, from the firſt, were ſo ſtruck with Mr.

Mr. Thornborough's converſation and addreſs, that Mr. Barrymore gave them both, though chiefly from regard to him, a general invitation to their houſe. This they frequently availed themſelves of; and one evening were aſked to a muſical party, to which many of their friends were invited. Mr. Godfrey refuſed; as he wiſhed to paſs an evening with the Wildings without his friend: but our hero accepted it. Sophia Barrymore was to be the principal vocal performer; and he was to accompany her on the hautboy.

When the tea was over, and the company were removing to another room, which had been previouſly ſtripped of the curtains and carpet; a young man,

taking a play-bill from his pocket, ſaid, he fancied their concert would afford more general ſatisfaction to thoſe who were ſo happy as to be preſent, than that which was to be performed at the theatre.

"Oh! pray Mr. Harriſon," cried a lady, "read us the bill: there is a new actreſs to appear to-night, I am told, and I want to know in what character." He obeyed, and read:

"At the theatre, at B——, will be performed, on Tueſday the ——— inſtant, a concert of vocal and inſtrumental muſic; between the ſeveral parts of which will be preſented (gratis) the tragedy of Venice Preſerved. Belvidera, by

by miſs Darley, being her firſt appearance on any ſtage."

"Miſs Darley!" exclaimed Mr. Thornborough, in an accent of ſupriſe, which eſcaped not the notice of any perſon in company; "pray, ſir, let me ſee the bill."

Mr. Harriſon inſtantly gave it him; and, whilſt reading it over, he endeavoured to recollect who miſs Darley was, or where he had heard of her; for he was very certain the name was no ſtranger to him. A few minutes were ſufficient to recal to his memory the ridiculous ſcene which had been acted in Cecil-ſtreet, in which ſhe played a capital part; and had not a doubt but it was

the ſame. Indeed, the romantic turn ſhe had then ſo evidently diſplayed, was reaſon enough for this ſuſpicion. The next thing which occurred to him was, that, if this was really that young woman, what ſteps could he take to reſtore her to her friends, from whom he doubted not but ſhe had eloped. As there was a poſſibility, however, of his being miſtaken, he determined to go to the play immediately; and, if his fears were confirmed, to call on her the next morning, and repreſent the impropriety and danger of her ſituation, in ſuch ſtriking colours, that he flattered himſelf it would have the deſired effect: and though the apparent rudeneſs of leaving Mr. Barrymore's houſe ſo abruptly,

ſtruck

ſtruck him; yet he thought a mere punctilio of civility ſhould not be put in competition with an act of neceſſity: for he conſidered, in a very ſerious light, that the longer ſhe aſſociated with ſuch wretches as ſtrolling players uſually are, the more deeply would her reputation be wounded, and her morals contaminated. Beſides, he believed he owed her ſome reparation for the terror he had once unintentionally thrown her into; and how could he confer any benefit which would ultimately prove ſo much for her good, as ſaving her perhaps from deſtruction?

He ſtill held the play-bill in his hand, whilſt engaged in theſe reflections; and, like Abel in the Committee, was ſo bu-

ried in his profound contemplations, that he could not ſee the whole party were as much taken up by obſerving him.

Diſturbed at laſt from his reverie by a lady who told him they were only waiting for him, he ſtarted, roſe up, and giving the paper to Mr. Harriſon, followed the reſt into the muſic room; and, going up to miſs Barrymore, ſaid he was really extremely concerned at being obliged to mortify himſelf by leaving her that evening, when he had hoped for the higheſt pleaſure in hearing her ſing; but that buſineſs of the moſt indiſpenſable and unavoidable nature called him away.

Sophia,

Sophia, though herſelf much diſappointed, could not but accept this apology; little gueſſing what the buſineſs was, as ſhe had been in the muſic room ſome time. He then addreſſed Mr. Barrymore in the ſame manner; and left the houſe precipitately, to avoid any queſtions from the reſt of his acquaintance.

Miſs Barrymore was a beautiful, elegant, accompliſhed, and faſhionable young woman; yet her perſon, attracting and intereſting as it was ever acknowledged to be, was yet far inferior to the qualities of her heart and mind: for the former was all excellence, and the latter all brilliancy. With every feminine

feminine virtue, ſhe poſſeſſed a dignity of ſoul, ſeldom blended, as in her, with extreme ſweetneſs, and extreme delicacy. Such was the charming Sophia, who, from her firſt introduction to Mr. Thornborough, had regarded him with more partiality than ſhe ever before had beſtowed on any of his ſex; and ſuppoſing his fortune to be ſo far beneath her own as to preclude all hopes of an alliance, ſhe had often lamented ſecretly that he was not, inſtead of his friend, born to affluence. Not that the conſideration of wealth could have influenced her; but from the knowledge that, without being accuſed of intereſted views, he could not addreſs her; nor could ſhe, without a manifeſt violation of all the laws

of

of propriety and female honour, ſtoop to let him know a regard which ſhe hoped to conquer; and would ſooner have died than confeſs, even ſuppoſing, which was next to an impoſſibility, her own friends would conſent.

Though born in high life, and accuſtomed to the faſhionable and gay world, the peculiar ſpirit, ſenſe, dignity, and elegance of our hero ſtruck her as uncommon even in the firſt ſtyle of company, and was to her ſurpriſing in a young man apparently dependant. How often did ſhe accuſe fortune of caprice, in not having changed their ſituations: for, in Mr. Godfrey, her deep penetration obſerved a civility to every perſon,

perſon, whoſe rank or fortune was at all diſtinguiſhed, that often deſcended almoſt to meanneſs, and appeared inconſiſtent with the ſtyle in which he lived. She ſaw he was vain, poſitive, and overbearing; and his ſenſe ſuperficial, though affectedly learned: but there were contradictions in his character which perplexed her extremely. Though evidently ambitious, he was known to addreſs miſs Wilding; and though ſo generally ſervile, and even cringing, he paid a reſpect and attention to Mr. Thornborough, which ſhe could only account for by ſuppoſing it the unintentional and unavoidable homage that is ſometimes paid to virtue.

She diſcovered in the latter a ſuperior

rior underſtanding, without any parade of learning; and a modeſt diffidence, which in her eyes rather heightened than concealed the luſtre of his good qualities; as it was wholly unaccompanied by that aukward baſhfulneſs, which is in itſelf ſo unpleaſant, that we often ſuffer it to obliterate from our minds the real virtues of its poſſeſſor.

Miſs Barrymore had allowed herſelf for ſome time to dwell ſo much on the merits of our hero, that ſhe was not a little chagrined at his abrupt departure: but how was her mortification increaſed, when, perceiving ſomething between a ſmile and a titter among the company in general, ſhe enquired the cauſe; and

was

was told that Mr. Godfrey had left that party, merely to ſee an old acquaintance of his, who was that night to make her firſt appearance upon the ſtage, but which he was a ſtranger to till the bill had been read. The circumſtances that preceded his departure were then mentioned, with many aggravations, and the addition of a thouſand ill-natured remarks, which did not in the leaſt add to her compoſure.

The concert at length began; but ſhe played ſo ill, and ſung ſo much out of time, that ſhe came in for her ſhare of obſervation: and one gentleman, who had been an unſucceſsful candidate for her favour, remarked, it was doubly ill-natured

ill-natured in Mr. Godfrey to deprive them of one of their beſt performers; and put the other ſo much out of tune, that what was uſually all harmony, was now all diſcord.

Miſs Barrymore heard this ſpeech indiſtinctly; and replied with much ſpirit, and ſome ſeverity, that where inſtruments were not in uniſon, there always would be diſcord. It had however a good effect on her; ſhe went on better: and when the concert was half over, and they were refreſhing themſelves with lemonade, orgeat, &c. Mr. Harriſon, whoſe curioſity could no longer let him reſt, propoſed going to the theatre,

theatre, to ſee if our hero was really there; and this meeting with general approbation, he ſet out.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.